

# NEW YORK Saturday Journal

A POPULAR PAPER FOR PLEASURE AND PROFIT.

Vol. V. NEW YORK, MARCH 21, 1874. No. 210.

## AN IDEAL.

BY L. C. GREENWOOD.

Thou who in my fancy seemest  
Fairer than all earthly maid,  
Of a beauty which ne'er fades;  
If I raised mine eyes in pleading,  
And my love they should betray,  
Wouldst thou kindly give me courage,  
Or in coyness turn away?

If thine eyes in drooping told me  
With the blushing of thy cheek,  
I might hope and summon courage  
Tender words of love to speak;  
And I whispered, wouldst thou listen,  
Lending an attentive ear,  
For my earnest soul's outpouring  
In confession uttered ne'er?

Wouldst thou in sweet words of fervor  
Modestly give me reply,  
With a strong and firm assurance,  
Calming every doubt and sigh?  
If thou wouldst, my fair ideal,  
All my treasured love were thine  
Unalloyed by worldly follies,  
I would claim and call thee mine.

## The Headless Horseman.

A STRANGE STORY OF TEXAS.

BY CAPT. MAYNE REID.

CHAPTER XXII.

AN UNKNOWN DONOR.

In Texas a duel is not even a nine days' wonder. It often ceases to be talked about by the end of the third day; and, at the expiration of a week, is no longer thought of except by the principals themselves, or their immediate friends and relatives.

This is so, even when the parties are well known and of respectable standing in society. When the duellists are of humble position—or, as is often the case, strangers in the place—a single day may suffice to doom their achievement to oblivion; to dwell only in the memory of the combatant who has survived it—often one than both—and perhaps some ill-starred spectator, who has been bored by a bullet, or received the slash of a knife, not designed for him.

More than once have I been witness to a "street fight"—improved upon the pavement, where some innocuous citizen, sauntering carelessly along, has become the victim—even unto death—of this irregular method of seeking "satisfaction."

I have never heard of any punishment awarded, or damages demanded, in such cases. They are regarded as belonging to the "chapter of accidents."

Though Cassius Calhoun and Maurice Gerald were both comparatively strangers in the settlement—the latter being only seen on occasional visits to the fort—the affair between them caused something more than the usual interest; and was talked about for the full period of the nine days. The character of the former as a noted bully, and that of the latter as a man of singular habits, gave to their duel a certain sort of distinction; and the merits and demerits of the two men were freely discussed for days after the affair had taken place—nowhere with more earnestness than upon the spot where they had shed each other's blood—in the bar-room of the hotel.

The conqueror had gained credit and friends. There were few who favored his adversary; and not a few who were gratified at the result; for, short as had been the time since Calhoun's arrival, there was more than one saloon lounge where he had felt the smart of his insolence.

For this it was presumed the young Irishman had administered justice, and there was almost universal satisfaction at the result.

How the ex-captain carried his discomfiture no one could tell. He was no longer to be seen swaggering in the saloon of the "Rough and Ready;" though the cause of his absence was well understood. It was not chagrin, but his couch; to which he was confined by wounds, that, if not skillfully treated, might consign him to his coffin.

Maurice was in like manner compelled to stay within doors. The injuries he had received, though not so severe as those of his antagonist, were nevertheless of such a character as to make it necessary for him to keep to his chamber—a small and scantily furnished bedroom in "Old Duffer's" hotel, where, notwithstanding the *ecceit* derived from his conquest, he was somewhat scurvily treated.

In the hour of his triumph he fainted from loss of blood. He could not be taken elsewhere; though, in the shabby apartment to which he had been consigned, he might have thought of the luxurious care that surrounded the couch of his wounded antagonist. Fortunately Phelim was by his side, or he might have been still worse attended to.

"Be Saint Patrick! it's a shame," half-soliloquized this faithful follower. "A burnin' shame to squeeze a gintleman into a hole like this, not bigger than a pigsty! A gintleman like you, Master Maurice! An' thin such ayin' and drinkin'! Och! a well did Irish pig w'd turn up its snout at such treatment. An' f'wat div yez think I've heard Owld Duffer talkin' about below?"

"I haven't the slightest idea, my dear Phelim; nor do I care a straw to know what you've heard Mr. Oberdoerfer saying below; but if you don't want him to hear what you are saying above, you'll moderate your voice a little. Remember, *ma bohl!* that the partitions in this place are only lath and plaster."

"Divil take the partitions; and divil burn them, av ye loikes! Av yez don't care for f'wat's sed, I don't care for f'wat's heard—not the snappin' av me fingers. The Dutchman can't trate us any worse than he's been doin' already. For all that, Master Maurice, I thought it best to lit you know."

"Let me know, then. What is it he has been saying?"

"Will, thin, I heard him tellin' wan uv his



"I wonder—oh, I wonder if it be she!"

creones that besides the mate an' the drink, an' the washin' an' lodgin', he intinded to make you pay for the bottles, an' glasses, an' other things, that was broke on the night av the shindy."

"Me pay?"

"Yis, yerself, Master Maurice; an' not a pinny charged to the Yankee. Now I call that downright rascally mane; an' nobody but a shanty Dutchman w'd iver hiv thought av it. Av there be any thin' to pay, the man that's bate should be made to shlowder the damage, an' that wasn't a discondant av the owld Gerald av Ballyballagh. Hoo—hooch! w'dn't I loike to shake a shaylahab about Duffer's head for the matter of two minutes? W'dn't I?"

"What reason did he give for saying that I should pay? Did you hear him state any?"

"I did, master—the dirtiest av all raisuns. He said that you were the bird in the hand; an' he w'd kape ye till yez silted the score."

"He'll find himself slightly mistaken about that; and would perhaps do better by presenting his bill to the bird in the bush. I shall be willing to pay for half the damage done; but no more. You may tell him so. If he speaks to you about it. And, in truth, Phelim, I don't know how I am to do even that. There must have been a good many breakages. I remember a great deal of jingling while we were at it. If I don't mistake, there was a smashed mirror, or clock-dial, or something of the kind."

"A big lookin'-glass, master; an' a crystal somethin', that was set over the clock. They say two hundred dollars. I don't believe they were worth wan-half av the money."

"Even so, it is a serious matter to me—just at this crisis. I fear, Phelim, you will have to make a journey to the Alamo, and fetch away some of the household gods we have hidden there. To get clear of this scrape I shall have to sacrifice my spurs, my silver cup, and, perhaps, my gun!"

"Don't say that, master! How are we to live, if the gun goes?"

"As we best can, *ma bohl!* On horseflesh, I suppose; and the lazo will supply that."

"Be Japers, it w'dn't be much worse than the mate Owld Duffer sits afore us. It gives me the bellyache ivery time I ate it."

The conversation was here interrupted by the opening of the chamber door; which was done without knocking. A slatternly servant—whose sex it would have been difficult to determine from outward indices—appeared in the doorway, with a basket of palmetto held extended at the termination of a long, sinewy arm.

"F'what is it, Gertude?" asked Phelim, who, from some previous information, appeared to be acquainted with the feminine character of the intruder.

"A shentlemans prot this."

"A gentleman! Who, Gertude?"

"Not know, mein herr; he was a strange shentlemans."

"Brought by a gentleman. Who can he be? See what it is, Phelim."

Phelim undid the fastenings of the lid, and exposed the interior of the basket. It was one of considerable bulk; since inside were discovered several bottles, apparently containing wines and cordials, packed among a paraphernalia of sweetmeats, and other delicacies—both of the confectionery, and the kitchen. There was no note accompanying the present—not even a direction—but the trim and elegant style in which it was done up proved that it had proceeded from the hands of a lady.

Maurice turned over the various articles, examining each, as Phelim supposed, to take note of its value. Little was he thinking of this, while searching for the "Invoice."

There proved to be none—not a scrap of paper—not so much as a card!

The generosity of the donor—well timed as it was—bespoke the donor to be some person in affluent circumstances. Who could it be?

As Maurice reflected, a fair image came up

permost in his mind; which he could not help connecting with that of his unknown benefactor. Could it be Louise Poindexter?

In spite of certain improbabilities, he was fain to believe it might; and so long as the belief lasted, his heart was quivering with a sweet beatitude.

As he continued to reflect, the improbabilities appeared too strong for this pleasant supposition; his faith became overturned; and there remained only a vague, unsubstantial hope.

"A gentleman lift it," spoke the Connemara man, in semi-soliloquy. "A gintleman, she sez; a-kind gintleman, I say! Who div yez think he was, master?"

"I haven't the slightest idea; unless it may have been some of the officers of the fort; though I could hardly expect one of them to think of me in this fashion."

"Nayther yez need. It wasn't wan of them. No officer or gintleman ayther, phut them things in the basket."

"Why do you think that?"

"Twily div I think it! Och, master! it is yerself av ask the quistun? Isn't there the smell av a swate finger about it? Jist look at the nate way them papers is tied up. That purty krel was never packed by the hand av a man. It was done by a wumun; and I'll warrant a real lady at that."

"Nonsense, Phelim! I know no lady who should take so much interest in me."

"Aw, murder! What a thumpin' big fib! I know one that sh'd. It w'd be black ungratitude av she didn't—after what yez did for her. Didn't yez save her life into the bargain?"

"Of whom are you speaking?"

"Now, don't be desatful, master. Yez know that I mane the purty crayther that come to the hut ridin' Spotly that you presinted her, widout reasvin' a dollar for the mare. If it wasn't her that sint ye this hamper, thin Phelim Onale is the biggest numskull that was iver born about Ballyballagh. Be the Virgin, master, speakin' of the owld place phints me in mind of its papsle. F'what w'd the blue-eyed colleen say, if she knew yez were in such danger heur?"

"Danger! it's all over. The doctor has said so; and that I may go out of doors in a week from this time. Don't distress yourself about that."

"Troth, master, yez be only talkin'. That isn't the danger I was dhravin' av. Yez know will enough what I mane. Maybe yez have received a wound from bright eyes, worse than from lid bullets. Or, maybe, somebody else has; an' that's why yez've had the things sint ye."

"You're all wrong, Phelim. The thing must have come from the fort; but whether you believe it did, or not, there's no reason why we should stand upon ceremony with its contents. So, here goes to make trial of them!"

Notwithstanding the apparent relish with which the invalid partook of the products—both of cellar and *cuisine*—while eating and drinking, his thoughts were occupied with a still more agreeable theme; with a string of dreamy conjectures, as to whom he was indebted for the princely present.

Could it be the young Creole—the cousin of his direst enemy, as well as his reputed sweetheart?

The thing appeared improbable. If not she, who else could it be?

The mustanger would have given a horse—a whole drove—to have been assured that Louise Poindexter was the provider of that luxurious refection.

Two days elapsed, and the donor still remained unknown.

Then the invalid was once more agreeably surprised, by a second present—very similar to the first—another basket, containing other bottles, and crammed with fresh "confections."

The Bavarian wench was again questioned;

but with no better result. A "shentlemans" "prot"—it—the same "stranger shentlemans" as before. She could only add that "the shentlemans" was very "schwartz," wore a glazed hat, and came to the tavern mounted upon a mule.

Maurice did not appear to be gratified with this description of the unknown donor; though no one—not even Phelim—was made the confidant of his thoughts.

In two days afterward they were toned down to the former sobriety—on the receipt of a third basket, "prot by the schwartz shentlemans" in the glazed hat, who came mounted upon a mule.

The change could not be explained by the belongings in the basket—almost the counterpart of what had been sent before. It might be accounted for by the contents of a *billet doux*, that accompanied the gift—attached by a ribbon to the wickerwork of palm-sinnet.

"Tis only Isidora!" muttered the mustanger, as he glanced at the superscription upon the note.

Then opening it with an air of indifference, he read:

"QUERIDO SEÑOR!

"Soy quedando por una semana en la casa del tio Silvio. De vuestra desfortuna he oido—tambien que V. esta mal cuidado en la fonda. He mandado algunas cosas. Sea graciosa usarios, como una chiquitita memoria del servicio grande de que vuestra deudor estoy. En la silla soy escribiendo, con las espuelas preparadas sacar sangre de las ijadas del mio cavallo. En un momento—mas, partirá por el Rio Grande."

"Bienheor—de mi vida—salvador—y de que a una mujer esta mas querida, la honra—adios—adios!"

"ISIDORA COVAREBIO DE LOS LLANOS."

"Al Señor Don Mauricio Gerald."

Literally translated, and in the idiom of the Spanish language, the note ran thus:

"DEAR SIR—I have been staying for a week at the house of uncle Silvio. Of your mischance I have heard—also that you are indifferently cared for at the hotel. I have sent you some little things. Be good enough to make use of them, as a slight souvenir of the great service for which I am your debtor. I write in the saddle, with my spurs ready to draw blood from the flanks of my horse. In another moment I am off for the Rio Grande!"

"Benefactor—preserver of my life—of what to a woman is dearer—my honor—adieu! adieu!"

"ISIDORA COVAREBIO DE LOS LLANOS."

"Thanks—thanks, sweet Isidora!" muttered the mustanger, as he refolded the note, and threw it carelessly upon the coverlet of his couch. "Ever grateful—considerate—kind! But for Louise Poindexter, I might have loved you!"

## CHAPTER XXIII.

VOWS OF VENGEANCE.

CALHOUN, chafing in his chamber, was not the object of such assiduous solicitude. Notwithstanding the luxurious appointments that surrounded him, he could not comfort himself with the reflection that he was cared for by living creature. Truly selfish in his own heart, he had no faith in friendship; and while confined to his couch—not without some fears that it might be his death-bed—he experienced the misery of a man believing that no human being cared a straw whether he should live or die.

Any sympathy shown to him, was upon the score of relationship. It could scarce have been otherwise. His conduct toward his cousins had not been such as to secure their esteem; while his uncle, the proud Woodley Poindexter, felt toward him something akin to aversion, mingled with a subdued fear.

It is true that this feeling was only of recent origin; and arose out of certain relations that existed between uncle and nephew. As already hinted, they stood to one another in the relationship of debtor and creditor—or mortgagee and mortgagee—the nephew being the latter. To such an extent had this indebtedness been carried, that Cassius Calhoun was in

effect, the real owner of Casa del Corvo; and could at any moment have proclaimed himself its master.

Conscious of his power, he had of late been using it to effect a particular purpose; that is, the securing for his wife, the woman he had long fiercely loved—his cousin Louise. He had come to know that he stood but little chance of obtaining her consent; but little taken but slight pains to conceal her indifference to his suit. Trusting to the peculiar influence established over her father, he had determined on taking no slight denial.

These circumstances considered, it was not strange that the ex-officer of volunteers, when stretched upon a sick bed, received less sympathy from his relatives than might otherwise have been extended to him.

While dreading death—which for a length of time he actually did—he had become a little more amiable to those around him. The agreeable mood, however, was of short continuance; and, once assured of recovery, all the natural savageness of his disposition was restored along with the additional bitterness arising from his recent discomfiture.

It had been the pride of his life to exhibit himself as a successful bully—the master of every crowd that might gather around him. He could no longer claim this credit in Texas; and the thought harrowed his heart to its very core.

To figure as a defeated man before all the women of the settlement—above all in the eyes of her he adored; defeated by one whom he suspected of being his rival in her affection—a mere nameless adventurer—was too much to be endured with equanimity. Even an ordinary man would have been pained by the infliction. Calhoun writhed under it.

He had no idea of enduring it, as an ordinary man would have done. If he could not escape from the disgrace, he was determined to avenge himself upon its author; and as soon as he had recovered from the apprehensions entertained about the safety of his life, he commenced reflecting upon this very subject.

Maurice, the mustanger, must die! If not by his (Calhoun's) own hand, then by the hand of another, if such an one was to be found in the settlement. There could not be much difficulty in procuring a confederate. There are *bravos* upon the broad prairies of Texas, as well as within the walls of Italian cities. Alas! there is no spot upon earth where gold cannot command the steel of the assassin.

Calhoun possessed gold—more than sufficient for such purpose; and to such purpose did he determine upon devoting at least a portion of it.

In the solitude of his sick chamber he set about maturing his plans, which comprehended the assassination of the mustanger.

He did not purpose doing the deed himself. His late defeat had rendered him fearful of chancing a second encounter with the same adversary—even under the advantageous circumstances of a surprise. He had become too much encouraged to play the assassin. He wanted an accomplice—an arm to strike for him. Where was he to find it?

Unluckily he knew, or fancied he knew, the very man. There was a Mexican at the time making abode in the village—like Maurice himself, a mustanger, but one of those with whom the young Irishman had shown a disinclination to associate.

As a general rule, the men of this peculiar calling are among the greatest reprobates, who have their home in the land of the "Lone Star." By birth and breed they are mostly Mexicans, or mongrel Indians; though, not unfrequently, a Frenchman, or American finds it a congenial calling. They are usually the outcasts of civilized society—often their outlaws—who, in the excitement of the chase, and its concomitant dangers, find, perhaps, some sort of salvo for a conscience that has been severely tried.

While dwelling within the settlements, these men are not unfrequently the pests of the society that surrounds them—ever engaged in broil and debauch; and when abroad in the exercise of their calling, they are not always to be encountered with safety. More than once it is recorded in the history of Texas, how a company of mustangers has, for the nonce, converted itself into a band of *cuadrilla de salteadores*; or, disguised as Indians, levied blackmail upon the train of the prairie traveler.

One of this kidney was the individual who had become recalled to the memory of Cassius Calhoun. The latter remembered having met the man in the bar-room of the hotel upon several occasions, but more especially on the night of the duel. He remembered that he had been one of those who had carried him home on the stretcher; and from some extravagant expression he had made use of, when speaking of his antagonist, Calhoun had drawn the deduction, that the Mexican was no friend to Maurice the mustanger.

Since then he had learned that he was Maurice's deadliest enemy—himself excepted.

With these data to proceed upon, the ex-captain had called the Mexican to his counsels, and the two were often closeted together in the chamber of the invalid.

There was nothing in all this to excite suspicion—even if Calhoun had cared for that. His visitor was a dealer in horses and horned cattle. Some transaction in horseflesh might be going on between them. So any one would have supposed. And so, for a time, thought the Mexican himself; for in their first interview, but little other business was transacted.

The astute Mississippi knew better than to declare his ultimate designs to a stranger; who, after completing an advantageous horse-trade, was well supplied with whatever he chose to drink, and cunningly cross-questioned as to the relations in which he stood toward Maurice the mustanger.

In that first interview, the ex-officer of volunteers learnt enough to know that he might depend upon him for any service he might require, even to the committal of murder.



The Mexican made no secret of his heartfelt hostility to the young mustang. He did not declare the exact cause of it; but Calhoun could guess, by certain innuendoes introduced during the conversation, that it was the same as that by which he was himself actuated—the same to which may be traced almost every quarrel that has occurred among men, from Troy to Texas—a woman!

The Helen in this case appeared to be some dark-eyed *doncella* dwelling upon the Rio Grande, where Maurice had been in the habit of making an occasional visit, in whose eyes he had found favor, to the disadvantage of her own compatriot.

The Mexican did not give the name; and Calhoun, as he listened to his explanations, only hoped in his heart that the damsel who had attracted him might have won the heart of his rival.

During his days of convalescence, several interviews had taken place between the ex-captain and the intended accomplice in his purposes of vengeance—though one might suppose, to have rendered them complete.

Whether they were so, or not, and what the nature of their hellish designs, were things known only to the brace of kindred confederates. The outside world but knew that Captain Cassius Calhoun and Michael Diaz—known by the nick-name "El Coyote," appeared to have taken a fancy for keeping each other's company; while the most respectable portion of it wondered at such an ill-starred association.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

##### ON THE AZOTEA.

THERE are no sluggards on a Texan plantation. The daybreak begins the day; and the bell, conch, or the cowhorn, that summons the dark-skinned proletarians to their toil, is alike the signal for their master to forsake his more luxurious couch.

Such was the custom of Casa del Corvo under its original owners; and the fashion was followed by the family of the American planter, not from any idea of precedent, but simply in obedience to the suggestions of Nature. In a climate of almost perpetual spring, the sweet matutinal moments are not to be wasted in sleep. The *siesta* belongs to the hours of noon; when all nature appears to shrink under the smiles of the solar luminary, as if surfeited with their superabundance.

On his reappearance at morn the sun is greeted with renewed joy. Then do the tropical birds spread their resplendent plumage—the flowers their dew-besprinkled petals—to receive his fervent kisses. All nature again seems glad to acknowledge him as its god.

Resplendent as some of the flutters among the foliage of south-western Texas, fair as any flower that blooms within its glades, was she who appeared upon the house-top of Casa del Corvo.

Aurora herself, rising from her roseate couch, looked not fresher than the young Creole, as she stood contemplating the curtains of that very couch, from which a Texan sun was slowly uplifting his globe of burning gold.

She was standing upon the edge of the azotea that fronted toward the east, her white hand resting upon the copstone of the parapet, still wet with the dew of the night. Under her eyes was the garden, inclosed within a curve of the river; beyond, the bluff formed by the opposite bank; and further still, the wide-spreading plateau of the prairie.

Was she looking at a landscape, that could scarce fail to challenge admiration? No.

Equally was she unconscious of the ascending sun; though, like some fair pagan, did she appear to be in prayer at its uprising!

Listened she to the voices of the birds from garden and grove swelling harmoniously around her?

On the contrary, her ear was not bent to catch any sound, nor her eye intent upon any object. Her glance was wandering, as if her thoughts went not with it, but were dwelling upon some theme, neither present nor near.

In contrast with the cheerful brightness of the sky, there was a shadow upon her brow; despite the joyous warbling of the birds, there was the sign of sadness on her cheek.

She was alone. There was no one to take note of this melancholy mood, nor inquire into its cause.

The cause was declared in a few murmured words, that fell, as if involuntarily, from her lips.

"He may be dangerously wounded—perhaps even to death?"

Who was the object of this solicitude, so hypothetically expressed?

The invalid that lay below, almost under her feet, in a chamber of the hacienda—her cousin, Cassius Calhoun?

It could scarce be he. The doctor had the day before pronounced him out of danger, and on the way to quick recovery. Any one listening to her soliloquy—after a time continued in the same sad tone—would have been convinced it was not he.

"I may not send to inquire. I dare not even ask after him. I fear to trust any of our people. He may be in some poor place—perhaps uncourteously treated—perhaps neglected? Would that I could convey to him a message—something more—without any one being the wiser! I wonder what has become of Zeb Stump?"

As if some instinct whispered her, that there was a possibility of Zeb making his appearance, she turned her eyes toward the plain on the opposite side of the river—where the road led up and down. It was the common highway between Fort Inge and the plantations on the lower Leona. It traversed the prairie at some distance from the river bank; approaching it only at one point, where the channel curved in to the base of the bluffs. A reach of the road, of half a mile in length, was visible in the direction of the fort; as also a cross-path that led to a ford; thence running on to the hacienda. In the opposite direction—down the stream—the view was open for a like length, until the chaparral on both sides closing in, terminated the savanna.

The young lady scanned the road leading toward Fort Inge. Zeb Stump should come that way. He was not in sight; nor was any one else.

She could not feel disappointment. She had no reason to expect him. She had but raised her eyes in obedience to an instinct.

Something more than instinct caused her, after a time, to turn round, and scrutinize the plain in the opposite quarter.

If expecting some one to appear that way, she was not disappointed. A horse was just stepping out from among the trees, where the road debouched from the chaparral. He was ridden by one, who, at first sight, appeared to be a man, clad in a sort of Arab costume; but who, on closer scrutiny, and despite the style of equitation—a la *Duchesse de Berri*—was unquestionably of the other sex—a lady. There was not much of her face to be seen; but through the shadowy opening of the *rebozo*—rather carelessly *tapado*—could be traced an oval facial outline, somewhat brownly "completed," but with a carmine tinting upon the cheeks, and above this a pair of eyes, whose

sparkle appeared to challenge comparison with the brightest object either on earth or in the sky.

Neither did the loosely-falling folds of the lady's scarf, nor her somewhat *outré* attitude in the saddle, hinder the observer from coming to the conclusion that her figure was quite as attractive as her face.

The man following upon the mule, six lengths of his animal in the rear, by his costume—as well as the respectful distance observed—was evidently only an attendant.

"Who can that woman be?" was the muttered interrogatory of Louise Poindexter, as with quick action she raised the lorgnette to her eyes, and directed it upon the oddly apparelled figure. "Who can she be?" was repeated in a tone of greater deliberation, as the glass came down, and the naked eye was trusted to complete the scrutiny. "A Mexican, of course; the man on the mule her servant. Some grand senora, I suppose? I thought they had all gone to the other side of the Rio Grande. A basket carried by the attendant. I wonder what it contains; and what errand she can have to the fort—it may be the village. 'Tis the third time I've seen her passing within this week! She must be from some of the plantations below!"

"What an outlandish style of riding! *Par diu!* I'm told it's not uncommon among the daughters of Anahuac. What if I were to take it to myself? No doubt it's much the easiest way; though if such a spectacle were seen in the States it would be styled unfeminine. How our Puritan mammas would scream out against it! I think I hear them. Ha, ha, ha!" The mirth thus begotten was but of momentary duration. There came a change over the countenance of the Creole, quick as drifting cloud darkens the disk of the sun. It was not a return to that melancholy so late shadowing it; though something equally serious—as might be told by the sudden blanching of her cheeks.

The cause could only be looked for in the movements of the scarfed equestrian on the other side of the river. An antelope had sprung up, out of some low shrubbery growing by the roadside. The creature appeared to have made its first bound from under the counter of the horse—a splendid animal, that, in a moment after, was going at full gallop in pursuit of the affrighted "pronghorn;" while his rider, with her *rebozo* suddenly flung from her face, its fringed ends streaming behind her back, was seen describing, with her right arm, a series of circular sweeps in the air!

"What is the woman going to do?" was the muttered interrogatory of the spectator upon the house-top. "Ha! As I live, 'tis a lasso!"

The senora was not long in giving proof of skill in the use of the national implement—by flinging its noose around the antelope's neck, and throwing the creature in its tracks!

The attendant rode up to the place where it lay struggling; dismounted from his mule; and, stooping over the prostrate pronghorn, appeared to administer the *coup de grace*. Then, flinging the carcass over the croup of his saddle, he climbed back upon his mule, and spurred after his mistress—who had already recovered her lasso, readjusted her scarf, and was riding onward, as if nothing had occurred worth waiting for!

It was at that moment—when the noose was seen circling in the air—that the shadow had reappeared upon the countenance of the Creole. It was not surprise that caused it, but an emotion of a different character—a thought far more unpleasant.

Nor did it pass speedily away. It was still there—though a white hand holding the lorgnette to her eye might have hindered it from being seen—still there, as long as the mounted figures were visible upon the open road; and even after they had passed out of sight behind the screening of the acacias.

"I wonder—oh, I wonder if it be she? My own age, he said—not quite so tall. The description suits—so far as one may judge at this distance. Has her home on the Rio Grande. Comes occasionally to the Leona, to some relatives. Who, who are they? Why did I not ask him the name? I wonder—oh, I wonder if it be she?"

#### CHAPTER XXV.

##### A GIFT UNGIVEN.

FOR some minutes after the lady of the lasso and her attendant had passed out of sight, Louise Poindexter pursued the train of reflection—started by the somewhat singular episode of which she had been spectator. Her attitude, and air of continued dejection, told that her thoughts had not been directed into a more cheerful channel.

Rather the reverse. Once or twice before had her mind given way to imaginings, connected with that accomplished equestrienne; and more than once had she speculated upon her purpose in riding up the road. The incident which had suddenly changed her conjectures into suspicions of an exceedingly unpleasant nature.

It was a relief to her, when a horseman appeared coming out of the chaparral, at the point where the others had ridden in; a still greater relief when he was seen to swerve into the cross-path that conducted into the hacienda, and was recognized, through the lorgnette, as Zeb Stump, the hunter.

The face of the Creole became bright again—almost gay. There was something ominous of good in the opportune appearance of the honest backwoodsman.

"The man I was waiting to see!" she exclaimed, in joyous accents. "He can bear me a message; and perhaps tell who she is. He must have met her on the road. That will enable me to introduce the subject without Zeb having any suspicion of my object. Even with him I must be circumspect—after what has happened. Ah, me! Not much should I care if I were sure of his caring for me. How provoking his indifference! Let to me—Louisa Poindexter! *Par diu!* Let it proceed much further, and I shall try to escape from the tolls if—I should crush my poor heart in the attempt!"

It need scarce be said that the individual whose esteem was so coveted, was not Zeb Stump.

Her next speech, however, was addressed to Zeb, as he reined up in front of the hacienda. "Dear Mr. Stump!" hailed a voice, to which the old hunter delighted to listen. "I'm so glad to see you. Dismount, and come up here! I know you're a famous climber, and won't mind a flight of stone stairs. There's a view from this house-top that will reward you for your trouble."

"Thank you, sartin' on the house-top thear," rejoined the hunter, "the view o' which 'ud reward Zeb Stump for climbin' to the top o' a steamboat chimney; and thet's your wife, Miss Lewaze. I'll kim up soon as I ha' stabled the ole maar, which shall be ole gal!" he continued, addressing himself to the mare, after he had dismounted. "Hold up y'r head, and maybe Plute hyur 'll g'e ye a wheen o' corn-shucks for y'r breakfast."

"Ho, ho! Mass' Tump," interposed the sable coachman, making his appearance in the *patio*. "Dat same do dis nigga—gub 'um de shucks

wi' de yaller corn inside ob dem. Ho, ho! You gwup 'tair to de young missa; an' Plute he no 'glick y'r old mar."

"Y'r a dod-rotted good sample o' a nigger, Plute; an' the nix ocasshun I shows about hyur 'll fetch you a 'possum w' the meat on it as tender as a two-year old chicken. Thet's what I'm boun' ter do."

After delivering himself of this promise, Zeb commenced ascending the stone stairway; not by single steps, but by two, and sometimes three at a stride.

He was soon upon the house-top, where he was once more welcomed by the young mistress of the mansion.

Her excited manner, and the eagerness with which she conducted him to a remote part of the azotea, told the astute hunter that he had been summoned thither for some other purpose than enjoying the prospect.

"Tell me, Mr. Stump," said she, as she clutched the sleeve of the blanket coat in her delicate fingers, and looked inquiringly into Zeb's gray eye. "You must know all. How is he? Are his wounds of a dangerous nature?"

"If you refer to Mister Cal-hoon—" "No—no—no. I know all about him. It's not of Mr. Calhoun I'm speaking."

"Wal, Miss Lewaze, thur air only one other as I know of in these parts thet hev got wounds; an' thet air Maurice the mowstang-er. Mout it be thet individooal y'r inquirin' about?"

"It is—it is! You know I can not be indifferent to his welfare, notwithstanding the misfortune of his having quarreled with my cousin. You are aware that he rescued me—twice I may say—from imminent peril. Tell me—is he in great danger?"

Such earnestness could no longer be trifled with. Zeb, without further parley, made reply: "Ne'er a morsel o' danger. Thur's a bullet-hole jest above the ankle-joint. It don't signify more'n the scratch o' a kitten. Thur's another hev' gone through the flesh o' the young fellow's left arm. It don't signify neyther—only they draves the good sun o' the red out o' 'em."

Howsoever, however, he's all right now; an' expects to be out o' door in a kuppel o' days, or tharabout. He sez that an hour in the saddle, an' a skoot across the purayra, 'ud do him more good than all the doctors in Texas. I reckon it w'd; but the doctor—it's the surgeon of the fort as attends on him—he won't let him git to grass yit a bit."

"Where is he?"

"He air stayin' at the hotel—whar the skrimmage tuk place."

"Perhaps he is not well waited upon? It's a rough place, I've heard. He may not have any delicacies, such as an invalid stands in need of? Stay here, Mr. Stump, till I come to you again. I have something I wish to send to him. I know I can trust you to deliver it. Won't you? I'm sure you will. I shall be with you in six seconds."

Without waiting to note the effect of her speech, the young lady tripped lightly along the passage, and as lightly descended the stone stairway.

Presently she reappeared, bringing with her a good-sized hamper, which was evidently filled with eatables, with something to send them down.

Now, dear old Zeb, you will take this to Mr. Gerald? It's only some little things that Florida has put up; some cordials and jellies and the like, such as sick people at times have a craving for. They are not likely to be kept in the hotel. Don't tell him where they come from—neither him nor any one else. You won't? I know you won't, you good dear giant!"

"Ye may depend on Zeb Stump for thet, Miss Lewaze. Nobody air a-goin' to be a bit the wiser about who sent these hyur delicacies; though for the sake o' thet, I'll k'ck-shaws an' all that sort o' thing, the mowstang-er hain't had much reezun to complain. He hev been supplied w' enuf o' them to hev filled the bellies o' a hul school o' shugrabbies."

"Ha! Supplied already! By whom?"

"Wal, thet theer this chile can't inform ye, Miss Lewaze; not bekownin' it hisself. I on'y hyurd they wur fetched to the tavern in baskets by some sort o' a sarvint-man as air a Mexikin. I've seen'd the man myself. Fact, I've jest this mornin' met him ridin' arter a woman sot stridy legs in her saddle, as most o' these Mexikin weemen ride. I reckon he be her sarvint, as he war keepin' a good ways ahint, an' the mowstang-er hain't had much reezun to complain. He hev been supplied w' enuf o' them to hev filled the bellies o' a hul school o' shugrabbies."

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hela, as she hastened to hide her chagrin in the solitude of her chamber.

For the first time in her life Louise Poindexter felt the pangs of jealousy. It was her first real love: for she was in love with Maurice Gerald.

A solicitude like that shown for him by the Mexican senora could scarce spring from simple friendship? Some closer tie must have been established between them? So ran the reflections of the now suffering Creole.

From what Maurice had said—from what she had herself seen—the lady of the lasso was just such a woman as should win the affections of such a man. Hers were accomplishments he might naturally be expected to admire.

Her figure had appeared perfect under the magnifying effect of the lens. The face had not been so fairly viewed, and was still undetermined. Was it in correspondence with the form? Was it such as to secure the love of a man so much master of his passions, as the mustang appeared to be?

The mistress of Casa del Corvo could not rest, till she had satisfied herself on this score. As soon as Zeb Stump had taken his departure, she ordered the spotted mare to be saddled; and, riding out alone, she sought the crossing of the river; and thence proceeded to the highway on the opposite side.

Advancing in the direction of the fort, as she expected, she soon encountered the Mexican senora on her return; no *senora* according to the exact signification of the term, but a *senorita*—a young lady, not older than herself.

At the place of their meeting the road ran under the shadow of the trees. There was no sun to require the coining of the *rebozo* upon the crown of the Mexican equestrian. The scarf had fallen upon her shoulders, laying bare a head of hair, in luxuriance rivaling the tail of a wild steed, in color the plumage of a crow. It formed the framing of a face, that, despite a certain darkness of complexion, was charmingly attractive.

Good breeding permitted only a glance at it in passing; which was returned by a like courtesy to the stranger. But, as the two rode on, back to back, going in opposite directions, neither could restrain herself from turning round in the saddle, and snatching a second glance at the other.

Their reflections were not very dissimilar: if Louise Poindexter had already learned something of the individual thus encountered, the latter was not altogether ignorant of her existence.

We shall not attempt to portray the thoughts of the senorita consequent on that encounter. Suffice it to say that those of the Creole were even more somber than when she sallied forth on that errand of inspection; and that the young mistress of Casa del Corvo rode back to the mansion, all the way seated in her saddle in an attitude that betokened the deepest dejection.

"Beautiful!" said she, after passing her supposed rival upon the road. "Yes; too beautiful to be his friend!"

Louise was speaking to her own conscience; or she might have been more chary of her praise.

"I cannot have any doubt," continued she, "of the relationship that exists between them. He loves her—he loves her! It accounts for his cold indifference to me? I've been mad to risk my heart's happiness in such an ill-starred entanglement!"

"And now to disentangle it! Now to banish him from my thoughts! Ah! 'tis easily said! Can I?"

"I shall see him no more. That, at least, is possible. After what has occurred, he will not come to our house. We can only meet by accident; and that accident I must be careful to avoid. Oh, Maurice Gerald! tamer of wild beasts, you have subdued a spirit that may suffer long—perhaps never recover from the lesson!"

#### CHAPTER XXVI.

##### STILL ON THE AZOTEA.

To banish from the thoughts one who has been passionately loved is a simple impossibility. Time may do much to subdue the pain of an unreciprocated passion, and absence more. But neither time nor absence can hinder the continued recurrence of that longing for the loved one, or quiet the heart aching with that void that has never been satisfactorily closed.

Louise Poindexter had imbibed a passion that could not be easily stifled. Though of brief existence, it had been of rapid growth, vigorously overriding all obstacles to its indulgence. It was already strong enough to overcome such ordinary scruples as parental consent, or the inequality of rank; and, had it been reciprocated, neither would have stood in the way so far as she herself had been concerned. For the former, she was of age; and felt—as most of her countrywomen do—capable of taking care of herself. For the latter, who ever really loved that cared a straw for class, or caste?

Love has no such meannesses in its composition. At all events, there was none such in the passion of Louise Poindexter.

It could scarce be called the first illusion of her life. It was, however, the first where disappointment was likely to prove dangerous to the tranquillity of her spirit.

She was not unaware of this. She anticipated unhappiness for awhile, hoping that time would enable her to subdue the expected pain.

At first, she fancied she would find a friend in her own strong will; and another in the natural buoyancy of her spirit. But as the days passed she found reason to distrust both; for, in spite of both, she could not erase from her thoughts the image of the man who had so completely captivated her imagination.

There were times when she hated him, or tried to do so, when she could have killed him, or seen him killed, without making an effort to save him! They were but moments; each succeeded by an interval of more righteous reflection, when she felt that the fault was hers alone, as hers only the misfortune.

No matter for this. It mattered not if he had been her enemy—the enemy of all mankind. If Lucifer himself—to whom in her wild fancy she had once likened him—she would have loved him all the same!

And it would have proved nothing abnormal in her disposition—nothing to separate her from the rest of womankind, all the world over. In the mind of man, or woman either, there is no connection between *moral* and the *passional*. They are as different from each other as fire from water. They may chance to run in the same channel; but they may go diametrically opposite. In other words, we may love the very being we hate—ay, the one we despise!

Louise Poindexter could neither hate, nor despise Maurice Gerald. She could only endeavor to feel indifference.

It was a vain effort, and ended in failure. She could not restrain herself from ascending to the azotea, and scrutinizing the road where she had first beheld the cause of her jealousy. Each day, and almost every hour of the day, was the ascent repeated.

Still more. Notwithstanding her resolve to avoid the accident of an encounter with the man who had made her miserable, she was oft

in the saddle and abroad, scouring the country around, riding through the streets of the village, with no other object than to meet him.

During the three days that followed that unpleasant discovery, once again had she seen—from the house-top, as before—the lady of the lasso en route up the road, as before accompanied by an attendant with the pannier across his arm—that Pandora's box that had bred such mischief in her mind—while she herself stood trembling with jealousy, envious of the other's errand.

She knew more now, though not much. Only she had learned the name and social standing of her rival. The Donna Isidora Covarubio de Los Llanos, daughter of a wealthy hacienda, who lived upon the Rio Grande, and niece to another whose estate lay upon the Leona, a mile beyond the boundaries of her father's new purchase. An eccentric young lady, as some thought, who could throw a lasso, tame a wild steed, or anything else excepting her own caprices.

Such was the character of the Mexican senorita, as known to the American settlers on the Leona.

A knowledge of it did not remove the jealous suspicions of the Creole. On the contrary, it tended to confirm them. Such practices were her own predilections. She had been created with an instinct to admire them. She supposed that others must do the same. The young Irishman was not likely to be an exception.



down to the level of her eyes, mingled with the plumes in her hat. She saw her saddle crouching, as if to avoid being observed—all the while with earnest glance scanning the open space before her.

She reached the crest of a hill which commanded a view beyond. There was a house in sight surrounded by tall trees. It might have been termed a mansion. It was the residence of Don Silvio Martinez, the uncle of Dona Isidora. So much had she learnt already.

There were other houses to be seen upon the plain below; but on this one, and the road leading to it, the eyes of the Creole became fixed in a glance of uneasy interrogation.

For a time she continued her scrutiny without satisfaction. No one appeared either at the house, or near it. The private road leading to the residence of the hacienda, and the public highway, were alike without living forms. Some horses were straying over the pastures; but not with a rider upon his back.

Could the lady have ridden out to meet him, or Maurice gone in?

Were they at that moment in the woods, or within the walls of the house? If the former, was Don Silvio aware of it? If the latter, was he at home—an approving party to the assignment?

With such questions was the Creole afflicting herself, when the neigh of a horse broke abruptly on her ear, followed by the clinking of a shod hoof against the stones of the causeway.

She looked below; for she had halted upon the crest of a steep acclivity. The mustanger was ascending it—riding directly toward her. She might have seen him sooner, had she not been occupied with the more distant view.

He was alone, as he had ridden past Casa del Corvo. There was nothing to show that he had recently been in company—much less in the company of an *amator*.

It was too late for Louise to shun him. The spotted mustanger had replied to the salutation of an old acquaintance. Its rider was constrained to keep her ground, till the mustanger came up.

"Good day, Miss Poindexter," said he—for upon the prairies it is not etiquette for the lady to speak first. "Alone?"

"Alone, sir. And why not?"

"This solitary ride among the chaparrals. But true, I think I've heard you say you prefer that sort of thing."

"You appear to like it yourself, Mr. Gerald. To you, however, it is not so solitary, I presume?"

"In faith, I do like it, and just for that very reason. I have the misfortune to live at a tavern, or 'hotel,' as mine host is pleased to call it; and one gets so tired of the noise—especially an invalid, as I have had the bad luck to be—that a ride along this quiet road is something akin to luxury. The name of *mezquite*—with the breeze that keeps constantly circulating through their fan-like foliage, would invigorate the feeblest of frames. Don't you think so, Miss Poindexter?"

"You should know best, sir," was the reply vouchsafed, after some seconds of embarrassment. "You who have so often tried it."

"Often! I have been only twice down this road since I have been able to sit in my saddle. But, Miss Poindexter, may I ask how you knew that I had been this way at all?"

"Oh!" rejoined Louise, her color going and coming as she spoke, "how could I help knowing it? I am in the habit of spending much time on the house-top. The view, the breeze, the music of the birds, ascending from the garden below, makes it a delightful spot—especially in the cool of the morning. Our roof commands a view of this road. Being up there, how could I avoid seeing you as you passed—that is, so long as you were not under the shade of the *acacias*?"

"You saw me then?" said Maurice, with an embarrassed air, which was not caused by the innuendo conveyed in her last words—which he could not have comprehended—but by a remembrance of how he had himself behaved while riding along the reach of open road.

"How could I help it?" was the ready reply.

"The distance is scarce six hundred yards. Even a lady, mounted upon a steed much smaller than yours, was sufficiently conspicuous to be identified. When I saw her display her wonderful skill, by straggling a poor little antelope with her lasso, I knew it could be no other than she whose accomplishments you were so good as to give me an account of."

"Isidora?"

"Isidora?"

"Ah, true! She has been here for some time."

"And has been very kind to Mr. Maurice Gerald?"

"Indeed, it is true. She has been very kind; though I have had no chance of thanking her. With all her friendship for poor me, she is a great hater of us foreign invaders; and would not condescend to step over the threshold of Mr. Oberdorfer's hotel."

"Indeed! I suppose she preferred meeting you under the shade of the *acacias*?"

"I have not met her at all; at least, not for many months; and may not for many months to come—now that she has gone back to her home on the Rio Grande."

"Are you speaking the truth, sir? You have not seen her since—She is gone away from the house of her uncle?"

"She has," replied Maurice, exhibiting surprise. "Of course I have not seen her. I only knew she was here by her sending me some delicacies while I was ill."

"The hotel *casino* is none of the nicest; nor was I the most welcome of Mr. Oberdorfer's guests. The Dona Isidora has been too grateful for the slight service I once did her."

"A service! May I ask what it was, Mr. Gerald?"

"Oh certainly. It was merely a chance. I had the opportunity of being useful to the young lady, in once rescuing her from some rude Indians—Wild Cat and his Seminoles—into whose hands she had fallen, while making a journey from the Rio Grande to visit her uncle on the Leonora."

"The house you can see from here. The brutes had got drunk; and were threatening—not exactly and whispering into the ear of her rider, with a rifle—though that was in some danger, but—well, the poor girl was in trouble with them, and might have had some difficulty in getting away, had I not chanced to ride up."

"A slight service you call it? You are modest in your estimate, Mr. Gerald. A man who should do that much for me—"

"What would you do for him?" asked the mustanger, placing a significant emphasis on the final word.

"I should love him," was the prompt reply.

"Then," said Maurice, spurring his horse close up to the side of the spotted mustanger, and whispering into the ear of his rider, with an earnestness strangely contrasting to his late reticence, "I would give half my life to see you in the hands of Wild Cat and his drunken comrades—the other half to deliver you from the danger."

"Do you mean this, Maurice Gerald? Do not trifle with me; I am not a child. Speak the truth! Do you mean it?"

"I do! As heaven is above me, I do! The sweetest kiss I ever had in my life was when a woman—a fair creature, in the hunting field—leaned over in her saddle and kissed me as I sat in mine."

The fondest embrace ever received by Maurice Gerald was that given by Louise Poindexter; when, standing up in her stirrup, and laying her hand upon his shoulder, she cried, in an agony of earnest passion: "Do with me as thou wilt: I love you—I love you!"

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 205.)

## ONE-ARMED ALF, The Giant Hunter of the Great Lakes; OR, THE MAID OF MICHIGAN.

A ROMANCE OF THE WAR OF 1812.

BY OLL COOMES.  
AUTHOR OF "DEATH-NOTCH," "BOY SPY," "OLD SOLDIER," "HAWKEYE HARRY," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE SPIRIT OF THE WOODS.

A cry of joy and terror escaped Helice Arvine's lips at sight of her young lover, Philip St. John, and the danger that menaced him at the moment; but her cry was too late to stop the movements of the *Ojibwa*, who arose to his feet and with a wild yell sprung out into St. John's canoe. Then the two grappled in a deadly embrace and a fearful struggle began.

For a moment the canoe rocked violently upon the water, but, at length, the combatants lost their balance and fell overboard into the water.

A wild, piercing scream now escaped Helice's lips, and she sunk down, almost unconscious, at Margery's feet.

"Go, Sultan, go!" suddenly commanded the scout, touching his dog upon the back.

Swift as a lightning's flash almost, the faithful dog shot from the canoe out into the water. For a moment he was lost from view beneath the waves, but, when he arose to the surface again, he struck out to where the two foes were struggling.

The dog, knowing the true foe by instinct, immediately seized the red-skin by the nape of the neck, burying his fangs deep in the muscles and tendons.

The savage seemed paralyzed by the gripe of this unknown foe, and his relinquished his hold upon the captain at once. The latter was himself, entirely ignorant from whence his unexpected assistance had come; but when he suddenly heard his name called by a familiar voice—the voice of One-Armed Alf—almost became plain to him.

It was the scout's dog that had seized the red-skin, and he proceeded to assist the noble beast to dispatch the foe. But his help was not needed. Sultan understood his work too well, and with a few vigorous shakes the neck of the savage was disjointed, and he sunk down, lifeless, in the water.

The dog returned to his master, followed by Captain St. John, who was soon taken aboard the fugitive craft, where a joyous surprise awaited him—where Helice Arvine's tears of sadness and fear were turned to gladness and joy, as she sobbed out her thanks to Heaven upon the breast of her lover.

One-Armed Alf was not entirely forgetful of their dangers during the few moments of joy and congratulation that followed Philip's escape. He well realized that the noise of the recent conflict would not escape the ears of the other savages, whom he knew to be in the vicinity, and draw them in that direction.

So he cautioned them to be silent, and again turned attention to their surrounding dangers. He listened, but all was silent, and when several moments had elapsed and no sound of approaching enemies broke the silence, he turned to St. John and said:

"I presume, captain, you have passed through the flint mills since we last parted."

"I have, most assuredly. I was taken a prisoner twice—once by the Indians and once by the British. The first time I was liberated by my dear friend, Jabez Muggins, where, I must admit I played the double role of whistler and spy to a demonstration. The last time my escape was owing to the fleetness of General Brock's horse, which I managed to mount in the very heart of the encampment, and which I turned loose when I reached the lake, a mile north of here."

"Whoop tee doodle!" exclaimed Jabez Muggins, "if you ain't got the grit, Cap, I never seed a polar-bear that had."

"Thanks for the compliment, Jabez," replied the captain. "I owe you a debt of gratitude that I hope I will be able to pay you some day. And I must say that you have been such a skillful actor in your parts of the dramas of which I have been a supernumerary, that I am half-inclined to believe you are the Spirit of the Woods."

"Oh, Jupiter, Cap!" exclaimed the trader, and he exchanged glances with One-Armed Alf, "such a thing is horribly impossible."

"Harkee, friends, harkee!" suddenly exclaimed the Giant Scout, in a low, husky tone; "yonder sits danger upon the margin of the opening."

He pointed across the glade, where all saw an Indian warrior seated in a small bark canoe, his head bent in the attitude of listening. He was an Indian whose evil, malignant features once seen would never be forgotten.

"Friends," said One-Armed Alf, and his voice sounded still huskier than ever, "I have seen that Indian before."

"Indeed," said Captain North, "but you are trembling, Alf—shaking as if with an ague fit."

"I know it, but never mind. This air around us is chilly," replied the scout; "yes, I saw that Indian's face years ago, friends; I remember it well, for it was he that assisted a score of others in torturing me, by cutting my right arm off! And now, friends, he must die, for he is the last one of that accursed set."

Here he broke suddenly off and remained quiet for full a minute. Then he started suddenly up again, and said, in a strange tone:

"Friends, the Spirit of the Wilderness is near you—you shall know him—he will slay your savage—behold!"

As he uttered the last word, he raised his long cane and pointed it with calm deliberation toward the listening red-skin. Our friends wondered at this movement, but when they saw a little jet of fire issue from the end of the cane, and heard the sharp, whiplike crack of a fire-arm, something of the reality dawned upon their minds—One-Armed Alf was the Spirit of the Woods, and his long, rude cane was the disguised rifle with which he slew his victims!

A cry of mortal agony followed the report, and the savage was seen to drop forward over the side of his canoe, where he hung, his hands beating the water in the convulsions of death.

"There, friends," the scout said, "with that red-skin is the secret of the Spirit of the Woods. I am that avenger, and his cane contains the rifle with which I have wreaked vengeance upon those who destroyed my home, then essayed to torture me to death by cutting

off my arms and feet. But, thank God, I escaped when they had deprived me of but one limb, and since then I have made it my sole object to slay those demons, and you have seen the last one expire."

You have kept your secret well, friend Alf," said Captain St. John, "for the name of the Spirit of the Woods has been spoken by every lip, red and white, in the North-west. The night of the conflict at your cabin, I suspected Darcy Mayfield of being the avenger; but I see now I was mistaken. I suppose no one knew that you were the avenger?"

"Yes," Darcy Mayfield knew it, and so did our old friend Jabez Muggins here, who is none other than my African servant and companion, *Ethiopia*."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed St. John.

"Ho! ho! ho! ho!" laughed Muggins, slapping the captain on the shoulder; "you bet, Cap, I'm the very chick that peddled whisky, and alms managed to get drunk at counsel, and sick like, whar that war lots to be heard."

"Yes," added the scout, "to Jabez is owing all my success as a scout. Through him I have been enabled, time and again, to give the settlement such information as saved them from destruction; and to me I will say he has been a true and noble friend."

"Well, really; this is singular and surprising news to me, Alf; but what connection has Darcy Mayfield with your work of vengeance?"

"He is interested as deeply as I, for the same demons that deprived me of an arm deprived him of a young wife. She was also my sister, and with her disappeared a young brother, neither of whom we have ever heard of since the night the Indians, under one Lieutenant Mackelogan, attacked our home."

"Poor Darcy!" said the captain; "I knew some great sorrow rested upon his heart; but I suppose death has relieved him of it."

"I presume he perished in the flames of my cabin, that terrible night, captain."

"But that rifle of yours—how does it work, anyhow?"

"It is a slender steel barrel, with a thin bore, concealed inside of this cane, and is loaded from the breech, and fired by means of a concealed spring, all of which is effected by pressure of the fingers without any one suspecting the truth. The muzzle of the piece is concealed by this silver ferule, which you see drops upon a concealed hinge by pressing a certain spring in the head of the cane. Under each of these little knots here is a spring, and alongside of the barrel is a receptacle in which I can carry a score of cartridges. The gun was the work of an ingenious Yankee gunsmith, living in Pennsylvania. And so now, friends, you all know the secret of the Spirit of the Woods, which amounts to nothing much, after all. When the secret of the Specter Skiff, and Maid of Michigan, is fully known, you'll find it is no more of a mystery than the Spirit of the Woods."

"Well, really, this revelation is something more than an everyday story—something that will cause no little surprise to those who have known you, and heard of the Spirit," said Captain North.

Then it was you who slew the traitorous Malagua the night we were deceived from the old French fort," said Margery Bliss.

"It was. After he had left you with Captain North, he started to follow you down the creek. I knew his intentions were to murder North, and so I—"

"Hark!"

The deep and sullen roar, like that of a cannon, suddenly rolled athwart the night, starting the little party from their silent quietude and ease of mind.

"Jerusalem crickets!" exclaimed Jabez Muggins; "what on 'arth war that bustled!"

"I think it was the report of a cannon; and as it came from over the lake, I darest say by daylight the following morning, they turned into the mouth of the Muskegon, and landed at Point Michigan."

To elude whatever dangers might be lurking in the forest, the party took to their boats again, and by hugging the shadows of the shore closely, they succeeded in eluding the cruiser, and by daylight the following morning, they turned into the mouth of the Muskegon, and landed at Point Michigan."

The approach of the English cruiser down the coast, soon put an end to the conversation of the little band of friends.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH.

Old Jack Eller and Colonel Bliss were the first to greet the arrival of the fugitives under One-Armed Alf, at the settlement. The colonel's joy knew no bounds when he was enabled once more to clasp his darling Margery to his breast; and when he learned that her escape from the treacherous Malagua was all owing to Captain Paul North, the young officer became the recipient of a shower of thanks and praises.

But he was not willing to be contented with these. Nothing but the possession of Margery herself would ever satisfy him, though he did not tell the colonel so at that time, for he knew that his English uniform would be a sufficient incentive to a prompt refusal by the loyal old American patriot. But, like the noble youth that he was, he took up arms in defense of the land, which from infancy he had claimed as his home—the land which had been a home to his father when England rejected him. Side by side with Captain St. John he fought through the terrible war that followed, and when peace was declared, he went back and claimed in wedlock, the hand of Margery Bliss. And then the old colonel did not object, for he felt proud of the noble Major Paul North.

Captain St. John and Helice Arvine were married at the close of the war, and took up their home in the territory of Michigan, along with most of their friends, who have been participants in our romance.

Charles Bradbury, or One-Armed Alf, as we have known him, served as a scout through the war of '12, and at its close received an appointment as civil officer of the territorial government of Michigan, in which capacity he won new distinction and honors.

Colonel Bliss and old Jack Eller took an active part in defense of their country, and Jabez Muggins, the whisky-trader, served along with his beloved friend, One-Armed Alf, to the last, though he never had recourse to his keg again, unless it was upon special occasions.

For a long time the mystery of the Firefaced, who rescued our friends from the Indians at the old French fort when attacked there, puzzled Colonel Bliss as to its cause of secrecy; but in the course of time, the mystery was solved. A band of lake pirates had been traced to this point, and there captured in a spacious, underground apartment which had probably been used as a secret powder-magazine by those who had first erected the fort. The object of that the Firefaced had in view, in rescuing our friends, will never be known, though it was in order, no doubt, to save themselves from dangers. For, had the fort fallen into the hands of the savages at that time, they would doubtless have found their secret rendezvous.

Sir Joshua Pellington roamed Lake Michigan in his Scorpion in search of the Maid of Michigan, for several days after the mystery of the Specter Skiff had been solved and the little craft had disappeared from the lake. Some way or other he had learned that the object of his search, Maria Bradbury, was aboard the craft, and he resolved to put forth every effort to capture her, as well as Robert Imbercourt, alias Philip St. John.

But the villain was doomed to disappointment; and one day while his vessel lay off the

Michigan," returned Muggins, beside himself with triumphant joy.

"And now, friends, is the time to make our way from this place," said One-Armed Alf.

"Yes, yes," replied St. John; "pull for the open lake, and then head away to the southwards; that will take us out of two perils."

Jabez Muggins seized the paddle, and at once sent the canoe across the glade and crashing through the reeds. In a few minutes they shot out into the open lake, and then turned southward.

The scout now swept the waters around him, and was not a little surprised to see a little sailboat, scarcely a hundred yards distant, coming down before the wind, while far behind it he could see a large boat evidently in pursuit of the little sail.

And even while his eyes were upon the pursuer, he saw a tongue of fire shoot out from the prow of the craft. A heavy boom rolled across the waters and died away among the hills in sudden information.

"I tell you, friends," said the scout, "that little sail yonder is that famous Specter Skiff, and I am almost positive it is being pursued by the Englishman."

"We are bound to know soon, Alf," replied North, "for that little sail is fast coming upon us."

"Yes; and for fear it contains enemies, we had better put ashore at once," said the scout.

"Ashore she goes!" replied Muggins; and he turned the craft shortly around with the ease of a skilled boatman.

In a few moments they had touched upon the beach, but before they had all landed, the little sail turned directly upon their wake, and came rushing in directly alongside their canoe, upon the beach.

"Who," he suddenly demanded One-Armed Alf, "who comes there?"

"I, Alf—Darcy Mayfield," was the reply.

"Oh, thank God!" burst in accents of joy from the scout's lips, as he sprang forward and grasped his supposed dead friend by the hand; "this is a joyous surprise to me, Darcy, for I supposed you had died that night at my cabin, and had been consumed in the fire that burnt the house."

"No, Alf, I was carried away by two Englishmen a prisoner; but of this hereafter. I have another joyous surprise for you. I have found her—Maria, and my darling wife, and brother Amos, too."

"Brother Charles, is it possible, that we meet once more?" cried Maria, running ashore from the little sailboat, and throwing her arms about the giant scout's neck. "Oh, brother! brother! Heaven has heard my prayers at last! And here, brother, is Amos, too!"

The giant scout embraced his sister and brother, too full of emotion for expression; and while he was thus engaged, Darcy Mayfield, or rather Walter Garfield, and Captain St. John exchanged words of thanks and joy over their reunion.

The meeting was followed by introductions all around. This led to the discovery that Mrs. Maria Garfield was the cousin of Captain St. John, or Robert Imbercourt—the same whom Sir Joshua Pellington had tried to persuade Robert to marry, in order to bring about a union of their English possessions.

The brothers and sisters and friends, all hastily narrated the events that had transpired since they had last met; and One-Armed Alf, or as he really was, Charles Bradbury, was not a little surprised when he learned that his sister Maria was the mysterious Maid of Michigan.

The approach of the English cruiser down the coast, soon put an end to the conversation of the little band of friends.

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But the villain was doomed to disappointment; and one day while his vessel lay off the

eastern coast of the lake, he took a small boat and put ashore to meet, by appointment, one of his Indian spies; and while there, he was shot through the heart by an unseen enemy; and at last he had reaped the wages of sin—Death.

THE END.

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## WITH THE TIDE.

BY WALLACE PUTNAM REED.

I am drifting down the river!  
And the crested, Pontic tide  
Bears me onward, pausing never,  
In its stately flowing pride;  
How I hate this steady measure!  
Will it never faster flow?  
This is neither pain nor pleasure:  
Significant was worse than woe.

There is life, just before me:  
Presence, fair as fair can be,  
Let me lift the veil that's o'er thee—  
Let us seek the smiling sea,  
And in strong and sweet alliance  
We will wake the downward deep,  
With a ringing, loud defiance  
To the Terror in his keep.

Dark is come upon the river,  
In its silent, sullen flow,  
And the stars begin to quiver  
In the darker depths below;  
One by one are disappearing  
All the signs of peaceful rest  
Let them go, for I am hearing  
Isis—fair goddess—guest!

Now, the shadows darker falling,  
With a thicker veil conceal  
The illusion that is calling  
In a silvery trumpet peal;  
And the Pontic tide is flowing  
To a dreary, sunless sea,  
This I know, and, if so knowing,  
Sift with Fate, it suits with me.

## Thwarted By Fate.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

Mr. Fay brought his hand down on the breakfast-table with a thump that his wife and daughter knew meant business.

"I tell you there is no earthly use talking me to death about it. I've passed my word; I've said Lily shall not marry that young scapegrace of a Winfield, and I'll stick to it, by Jupiter!"

And then, for emphasis, down came his fist with a force that made the china and silver rattle in chorus; and that sent a suspicion of tears to Lily Fay's blue eyes, that she strove to hide by bending her pretty, dusky-haired head lower over her plate of broiled quail.

Under the shelter of the sweeping-white damask cloth, Mrs. Fay gave her daughter's knee a sympathizing little pinch; while Mr. Fay, having duly delivered himself of what he believed to be his duty, finished his toast and egg in supreme content; kissed his wife and daughter good-by, and departed down town.

"Oh, mamma!"

"You poor dear! But, keep a good heart, and maybe father'll see fit to change his mind." But as she spoke, Mrs. Fay tried to recall in vain a single instance during the twenty years of her married life, when Mr. Fay "had seen fit to change his mind."

"And Fred'll be so disappointed! Mamma, what can be the reason he's so averse to Fred? I'm sure he's perfection."

A comical little smile flitted across Mrs. Fay's face.

"I'm sure I think he's a very nice young man, Lily dear; but I believe your father considers him not quite the style for his son-in-law."

"And do you really suppose father'll forbid my seeing him, at all? Oh, mamma, that would break my heart!"

Her sweet voice quivered, and she turned her entreating eyes on her mother's face.

"You know it isn't your father alone disapproves of it, child. You know what Fred's aristocratic mother thinks."

Then a hot blush surged over Lily's face; and her mother saw the sparkle in her eyes.

"I know it," she said, hotly. "I know what Fred thinks of her opinion, too. The idea of despising a girl because she hasn't a fortune at her command! Fred is not like her, at any rate."

"But Mrs. Winfield is a sensible woman of society; she is his mother—remember that, dear!"

"There's not much danger of my forgetting it—or that papa is my father!"

She spoke so bitterly; but even while her mother looked reproachfully at her, her own heart ached for the girl, whose first, sweetest love was to be crushed out because on one side there was not enough money, on the other too much pride.

"You cannot censure your father, Lily. I am sure. He very naturally resents the slight Mrs. Winfield has cast upon us, and all that he can do is to forbid you to—have any more to do with Fred."

"Oh, mamma!"

It was a perfect little wall of agony, and then Lily arose from the breakfast table, and went about her duties with a sad, sad heart.

It was a splendid little room in which Mrs. Winfield sat; an octagonal-shaped apartment with walls hung in blue fluted silk, and the ceiling painted silvery blue, relieved with the rarest tint of pink.

A parian marble clock ticked musically on the gilt mantelpiece; a low, cherry-red fire glimmered in the grate; a silver-throated canary warbled low, sweet notes from its cage among the vines in the tiny bay-window; and enjoying it all, in the fragrant dusk of that sharp December twilight, Mrs. Winfield sat, in negligent attitude, in a low, long blue satin chair, before the fire; a scarlet India shawl thrown across her silken dress.

A handsome *dishonore* looking woman, whose only child Frederic was her very counterpart in elegance of form, grace of bearing, and beauty of face.

And this same boy, for whom she lived, to whom every thing would belong when she was laid away; this handsome-faced son of hers, over whom four-fifths of the available girls raved; this Fred Winfield, with all his good looks and great expectations, had actually fallen in love with the daughter of a coffee-merchant—a man who really and truly ran a mill, and only hired four or five hands, and who couldn't at farthest be worth over ten thousand dollars!

What if Fred did rave over her—"his fair little Lilybud"? Pah—nonsense! Fred would get over it in due season, and laugh at his folly in a twelvemonth. As long as it amounted to a mere flirtation—why, Mrs. Winfield thought it would end where it began—with Fred. But an engagement! a downright, lawful engagement! it made her positively ill to think of it; and such people as those Fays would be the very ones to keep Fred up to his promise. And then Fred came in, with his quick, healthful tread, his joyous, vitalizing presence, his tender, thoughtful consideration.

"Mother mine! this room is hot enough to melt a salamander! And you with such a cold!"

He kissed her forehead lightly; threw off his overcoat, and took a letter from his vest-pocket as he sat down.

"From uncle Simeon, you know. He is disposed to hold me to my promise of a winter in the wilds of Maine. I don't suppose you could spare me?"

His words, his manner, his smile, were so dear to her fond, foolish heart. How could

she spare him a week, a day? And then, of a sudden came the thought, it was ordered by the Fates—it would take him away from those Fays, from that girl who bewitched him so. And a month's absence—it would work charms! Yes, she could spare him; it would be a delightful change for him; he had better go, and go at once, as uncle Simeon proposed, while the lumber-hauling was at its height.

So it happened that they parted—Fred Winfield and Lily Fay, with many a vow and promise to be true, come what might.

And the day after her son was safely off, Mrs. Winfield's grand broughie stopped at Mrs. Fay's door, and Lily, when the short, cool interview was over, went up to her room, to cry herself sick because she knew now she must give him up—her darling, her love.

She never told Fred of the polite impudence of his mother, who fairly dared her to marry her son, who almost accused her of conspiracy, because her sweet face had charmed the young man.

She only went around the house, pale, spiritless, quiet, until even Mr. Fay wondered if the girl had gone clean daft.

"She wants a change," the mother said; "something to get her mind off herself; new faces, new associations. Shall we send her off to aunt Priscilla's, for a month or so?" And so it happened that Lily and her two trunks went off to aunt Priscilla's, her newly married aunt, who, after forty years of maiden meditation, had at last united hands and fortune with a worthy man, as yet a stranger to the Fays, except by name—Mr. Wilkinson.

The winter sun was shining almost blindingly on the wide expanse of snow-clad earth when Lily alighted from the cars at the station in the little Eastern town, and looked half-tinged, half-inquiringly about her; for her uncle—Mr. Wilkinson—had written he would meet her without fail.

And just that minute a large pung came rapidly up the smooth, icy road, drawn by a pair of powerful black horses, whose double strings of old-fashioned bells made a rousing tintinnabulation. Lily recognized her aunt Priscilla's husband in a moment, and Mr. Wilkinson greeted her with a warm hospitality that went straight to her heart.

Once in the cozy pung—sleighs, we call our delightful vehicles on runners—Lily grew talkative and interested, and Mr. Wilkinson proved fully equal to the occasion.

"You must not go back to York with such pale cheeks—if you are a Lily. Our sledges-parties, our apple-bees, our quilting-frolics—they'll fetch the roses back again."

"I was afraid I'd be lonesome and homesick," she began, deprecatingly, but he stopped her with Lily's roughness.

"Lonesome! bless my soul! Why, I'll bet a hardy young fellow you go back engaged to a smart young fellow I might mention—stopping at my house for a while—my sister's boy, you know."

His sister's boy! Lily felt herself thrill with repulsion for him, or anybody else's sister's boy.

At the farm-house door aunt Priscilla met them, with hearty kisses for Lily, and warmest expressions of delight as she fairly carried her in, depositing her on a cozy cushioned chair, and divesting her of her wraps.

"Where's the boy?" Mr. Wilkinson inquired, with an affectionately brusque pride that touched Lily.

"He's coming—oh, Fred, Miss Lily!"

Aunt Priscilla paused, point-blank, in speechless amazement, for her niece and her husband's nephew had rushed to each other's arms in a manner very unwarranted in utter strangers.

Sure enough, they had been parted to meet so strangely, and it need hardly be said the courtship flourished without a flaw down in the old Maine farm-house.

Mr. and Mrs. Wilkinson were of course told just how matters stood; and then, with true Yankee ingenuity, determined to assist the young lovers to each other.

So, by one mail there went two letters, one day, a month probably since Lily's arrival.

And one letter was to uncle Simeon Wilkinson's sister, Mrs. Winfield, telling her Fred had met a charming girl, with a fortune equal to Fred's—which fortune Mr. Wilkinson had determined to settle on her himself—and asking Mrs. Winfield for her consent, on his recommendation.

And as Mrs. Winfield liked nothing so well as money, she heartily gave her brother power to act as he chose.

The other letter from aunt Priscilla to her brother, Mr. Fay, was a long, tiresome one, but it told its story: how Lily had regained her roses; how she sung and laughed, and—was in love with Simeon's nephew, a splendid young fellow of large fortune; an unexceptionable young man to whom aunt Priscilla would be only too pleased to see Lily married.

And the answers came—do as you see fit.

Then there was a wedding in the Wilkinson farm-house, and then, when Fred and Lily went home on their bridal tour—

"Well, it was done, never to be undone. Fred was so happy, Lily so lovely—who could say very much?"

And so, time adjusted it all admirably; and time has proved to everybody's complete satisfaction that it was a very good thing that the experiment to part Fred and Lily was thwarted by Fate.

## Gentleman George:

PARLOR, PRISON, STAGE AND STREET.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.

AUTHOR OF "THE MAN FROM TEXAS," "MAD DETECTIVE," "ROCKY MOUNTAIN BOB," "WOLF DEMON," "OVERLAND KIT," "RED MAKEPEA," "ACE OF SPADES," "HEART OF FILL," ETC.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE STARTLING REEF.

"Ah, oh!" The Judge caressed his chin with his hand thoughtfully for a few moments. "You make this statement boldly," Bruyn observed, after quite a long pause.

"When a man is prepared to back up his statement, how else should he make it?"

"Quite true—quite true," the Judge murmured, absently.

"I happened to stroll into the theater where she was playing, some six months ago," Jemmisson continued; "it was when she was performing in New York here. Of course, I had a little idea of seeing my wife, that was—what had deserted me years before—as of seeing a tenant of the tomb rise bodily from the grave. But the moment Miss Ellen Desmond came on the stage, I recognized her, despite the disguise she wore. Then I took measures to have an interview with her."

"And you succeeded?" the Judge inquired, his curiosity excited.

"Yes, although I had to almost force my way into her apartment, as she denied herself to me, and gave orders to her servant not to admit me."

"Well, did she acknowledge that she was

Lina Aton?" The Judge felt decidedly interested.

"No; I did not care for that point; I sought her that I might learn the fate of my child."

"And she told you?"

"Yes; although of course denying that she was the woman that I took her to be, or that she had ever seen me before. She found that I would not go unless I was satisfied as to the fate of the child; threats and entreaties alike were vain, and so, at last, she said that she had no child living who had my blood in its veins."

"She threatened you?" the Judge said, musingly.

"Yes."

"In what way?—you must excuse my cross-examination; but of course you fully understand how important it is that I should know all that relates to this person," Bruyn said, in explanation.

"Question freely, sir," Jemmisson replied. "She threatened to call the police, and have me arrested."

"A natural proceeding if you were incorrect as to her identity."

"And I on my part defied her to call in the officers, as I, too, could bring an accusation against her. She instantly replied that if she was Lina Aton—or Jemmisson, rather—that the law was powerless to harm her for the offense of running away from me."

"A logical conclusion, by Jove!" exclaimed Bruyn, his brows contracting and his mouth tightening. "It seems, then, that Miss Desmond was posted as to the law's power over runaway wives?"

"So I remarked; and then I explained to her that if I could not hold her on that charge, I could for larceny, as in her flight she had carried away all the portable property she could get her hands on."

"Quite a shrewd legal trick," Bruyn remarked, dryly.

"Then she adopted a different tone, and gave me the information that I wished, protesting, though, to the last, that she was not the person that I said she was."

"Did you see her after that interview?"

"No; I had learned all that I wished to know. It was six or eight months ago. I cared nothing what became of the woman; but by an accident I learned to-day that you were about to marry her."

The Judge made a wry face and Jemmisson stopped; he imagined that the Judge wished to say something.

"Go on, sir," Bruyn said, hastily.

"I thought if the report were true, that it was my duty as a man that you should know what the past life of this woman has been. If she has acted fairly with you, you should already have heard all that I have just told from her own lips. Perhaps to her eyes her conduct may not appear quite so black as I have painted it. She may have good and sufficient reasons for all that she has done."

"Yes, yes, probably," the Judge murmured.

"Yes; and so skillfully has she covered up the traces, that it would really be a very difficult matter for me to prove in open court that she really is the person I know her to be."

Jemmisson said, slowly. "You are probably aware, Mr. Bruyn, that there are marks on the human body, sometimes relied upon in law-cases to establish a person's identity that can easily be removed by the chemist's art?"

"Indeed, I was really not aware of that," the Judge confessed; "no such case has ever come under my observation. To what marks do you refer?"

"Moles, of course you are aware that a mole is but an excrescence, and does not penetrate into the flesh."

"Certainly—of course."

"By means of a thread and a caustic preparation, a mole can be entirely removed, and without leaving any trace that there has ever been any such mark upon the person."

"That is quite reasonable," said the Judge, reflectively; and then all of a sudden the thought flashed upon him that he had relied upon finding a certain woman by means of moles curiously placed upon her body, a description of which he had furnished to a detective officer; and mentally he asked himself if one woman knew how to destroy such tell-tale marks, might not another of the sisterhood avail herself of a like means? "And this Miss Desmond does not have the moles upon her person that the Lina Aton, the milliner's girl, had?" the Judge questioned.

"No; she has removed them."

"At that one point she has beaten you, then?"

"Yes; she has also changed the color of her hair. Once it was dark-brown, now she has bleached it to yellow."

"You have attempted a difficult task, I fear," the Judge remarked, shaking his head, gravely.

"No; for I have one strong proof."

"What is it?" all the lawyer instincts of the Judge had been roused into action.

"A picture of her taken just a month after we were married," Jemmisson replied. "It is one of the old-fashioned daguerotypes."

"That would be pretty strong proof if Miss Desmond looks like the picture, and you could take your oath that it was taken twenty years ago from your wife's face," the Judge said, weighing the point over deliberately as he spoke.

"That I could do," Jemmisson replied; "and, as for the likeness, you shall judge as to that."

And as he spoke he drew the picture from his pocket.

There is only one difference between Miss Desmond and this picture of Lina Aton, Jemmisson observed, as he opened the case; "a mole on the left cheek is shown in the picture, but Miss Desmond's cheek does not bear any such mark."

"A mole on the left cheek!" exclaimed Bruyn, with strange abruptness, and sitting bolt upright in his chair as he spoke. "Has she moles anywhere else?"

"Miss Desmond, no; Lina Aton, two on the right wrist!" Jemmisson answered, wondering at the sudden excitement manifested in the Judge's manner.

"Great heavens!" cried Bruyn, nervously; "let me look at the picture!" and, as he spoke, he almost snatched it from Jemmisson's hands.

A single glance the Judge gave at the fair young face, and then, with a gasp, sunk back in his chair.

Jemmisson, alarmed, sprung to his assistance, but Bruyn with a great effort rallied himself.

"Don't be alarmed, sir!" he exclaimed. "Oh! I have been blind not to have seen it before!"

Jemmisson wondered at the words.

"I am much obliged to you, sir," Bruyn continued; "and if you will leave your address I will communicate with you at some future time."

Jemmisson understood from this that the interview was over, and penciling his address on a card, left the house.

## CHAPTER XLII.

## BRUYN'S DECISION.

The Judge accompanied Jemmisson to the door, bowed him out, and then closed the massive barrier after him.

Bruyn's usually florid face was deathly pale, and there was a nervous, restless twitching of the lips altogether foreign to the nature of the man.

From the front door Bruyn proceeded upstairs to his bed-chamber, a front room on the same floor as the library.

So slowly did the Judge—a heavy, solid-built man—proceed up-stairs that his footsteps produced no sound.

In his room, the Judge went to a closet in one corner, took down a bottle of brandy and filled a tumbler brimming full. A moment he held it up to the light and watched the sparkle of the most potent product of the vine, and then, with a heavy sigh, swallowed the liquor at a single draught.

Was the stern, iron-willed man seeking false courage, and did he fear the interview which he had resolved to seek?

The brandy swallowed, the Judge straightened himself up as he proceeded at once to the library. He found the lady sitting in the same position that she had occupied when he had left the room.

A quick, sharp glance the woman cast in his face, and there she read that the blow had fallen; but, with the resolution of despair, she concealed her anxiety and received him with a smile. The Judge's face grew graver still as he noticed the look, but his iron will never faltered.

Bruyn seated himself in the easy-chair, and, as he did so, his glance fell upon the card, lying upon the floor just where it had fallen from the nervous hand of the woman when she had read Neil Jemmisson's ominous name.

The Judge understood at once that she knew who had called upon him. The little circumstance gave him the opening he sought.

"I see, madam, that you know who my visitor was, and you can probably guess what his errand was to this house, although he had little idea that at present you were an inmate of it."

The woman had noticed the Judge's glance at the tiny bit of pasteboard, and understood how useless it was to attempt to deny that she had read the name inscribed upon it; the single term "madam," too, told her that her chance was but a desperate one, but it was a lion heart the woman bore within her breast, and she still smiled sweetly, although the blood was at fever heat within her veins.

"Yes, I have seen the person once," she said, with just a little curl of the lip, "and from the short conversation that I had with him, I should judge that he had escaped from some lunatic asylum."

"Well, to me there appeared to be a great deal of method in his madness!" the Judge exclaimed, bluntly.

Just for a moment the smile faded from the face of the woman and a lurid light shone in her eyes, but then she remembered how difficult a game she had to play, and how desperate her chances were, and, with a powerful effort, she curbed the rising anger that swelled within her heart.

"Possibly his story may appear plausible to you," she said, with great calmness; "I suppose that he repeated to you the same ridiculous story he told me when he forced himself into my presence."

"I presume so," the Judge answered, coldly; "and in order that the matter be fully understood, I will repeat his statement. In the first place, he states that when he first met you, some twenty years ago, you were called Lina Aton; that under that name he married you and—"

"It is needless to repeat his ravings!" the woman exclaimed, contemptuously, interrupting the Judge.

"It is necessary that a criminal should know the facts alleged against her," said the Judge, sternly.

"My heavens!" cried the actress, rising to her feet and cast a withering glance upon the stolid, stern-faced man, "is it possible that I am looked upon in the light of a criminal, and solely upon the unsupported word of this paltry fellow? If you had loved me with one little hundredth part of the passion which you pretended to feel for me, you would have stricken this wretch to the floor the moment he dared to asperse the character of the woman who has a right to your protection."

"Sit down, madam, and let us have no more of your theatrical nonsense!" exclaimed the Judge, sternly. "You are not now acting a part on a play."

"No, I am on trial—a criminal, I presume, from your tone," the actress replied, with biting sarcasm, sinking in the nearest chair.

"Not on trial, for you are already tried, judged and found guilty," Bruyn said, coldly and calmly.

The actress raised her eyebrows in pretended astonishment.

"Oh, indeed, and in your court do you convict upon the evidence of the complaining party? Does the accused have no chance to answer—no opportunity to prove her innocence and show what a black-hearted liar the man is who seeks such a cowardly revenge?"

The blood of the actress was up; it swelled in every vein; anger flashed from her eyes, and her little white hands were clenched until the pink nails cut into the waxen-like flesh.

"Madam, it is useless to bandy words," the Judge said, impatiently. "I am perfectly satisfied that Mr. Jemmisson has spoken the truth. I feel convinced that you are the Lina Aton who married and deserted him, years ago; and, moreover, I know that Lina Aton is not the only name that you have been known by; and now, in conclusion, will you oblige me by putting on your hat and cloak and quitting this house. Your trunks shall be sent to-morrow to any place that you may designate."

The actress indulged in a little scornful laugh, and regarded the Judge with a look of defiance.

"You forget yourself, Judge Bruyn," she said, in a tone of contempt; "you can not order me out of this house; I am your legal wife, and whatever my past life may have been, at present I hold only that position."

"My wife, eh?" the Judge said, a peculiar look upon his stolid face. "Mr. Jemmisson may have something to say about that. I doubt if you have ever taken the trouble to legally end your contract with him."

"He will have to prove that I am the woman he says I am!" she exclaimed, defiantly.

"And you, madam, will have to prove that I was ever married to you, and I fancy that that task will not be as easy as you think," the Judge retorted.

The actress started, and a feeling of horror

crept over her. Eagerly in her mind she thought over the details of her marriage the day before, but all seemed clear.

"I can do that!" she replied, triumphantly; "we were married by the Reverend Mr. Hatrick, pastor of the 10th German Reformed Church; I saw it on the door-plate!"

"Ah, indeed? Recall how the affair happened," he said, blandly. "We were to be married in a week, but, driving through a street, in the upper part of the city, I noticed the name of the minister on the door and suggested that we should go in and be married at once; you jumped at the idea and married we were. Now, then, find me the minister who married us, his wife and servant who witnessed the marriage, or any such thing, either in New York or elsewhere, as a 10th German Reformed Church."

The actress ground her teeth together and her breath came thick and hard.

"Oh, you are a fiend!" she cried.

"Yes, to the lurpries who try to make me their prey," he answered, sternly. "I had a doubt of you, and so I arranged the Reverend Mr. Hatrick for your special benefit. If you had proven to be a good and honest woman, my introducing you to the world as my wife, would have been a legal marriage according to the laws of the State; but now, you are nothing to me. Leave this house at once, and it will be well for you, if you are wise enough to accept your defeat without a struggle."

The woman rose slowly to her feet.

"I cannot curse you, for words and human wills seem powerless against you. You are not a man but a fiend. Twice I have failed, but the third time"—and she hesitated and ground her teeth together.

"The third time!" cried Bruyn, rising to his feet, white with passion; "if you ever cross my path again, I'll kill you if it costs me all I have in the world to get out of it."

Ten minutes later, the actress, homeless, stood in the street.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 196.)

## The Silver Serpent:

THE MYSTERY OF WILLOWOLD.

BY A. P. MORRIS, JR.

AUTHOR OF "TYTOL," "STEALING A HEART," "IRON AND GOLD," "PEARL OF TEARLS," "RED SCORPION," "HEROQUE, THE HUNCHBACK," "FLAMING TALLESMAN," "CAT AND TIGER," ETC.

## CHAPTER XX.

## THADLIS BEGINS WORK.

It will be remembered that Thadlis had conceived the idea of a plan by which his employer might recapture Stella Bellerayon and bear her to Willowold, or to some other place of confinement, since Willowold was by this time totally destroyed by fire.

His mind was unexpectedly disturbed, therefore, by the condition of Wise De Martine, who, in all probability, would have to be removed in a conveyance to his home, where he could receive thorough medical attention, and nursing by his wife.

About half an hour after seeing and hearing what transpired in the entry, and while he was seated at a bounteous repast which was served up, a physician—who had been sent for by the landlord—made his appearance.

A man who was short, stout, smooth-faced, with little gray eyes, wearing black clothes, stiff stock collar, and of a highly professional air.

"Come in," responded Thadlis, as a business-like rap sounded on the door.

The sleek individual entered, rubbing his chubby hands together, smiling complacently.

"Oh, you are the doctor," added Thadlis, rising.

"Good-day—good-day, sir. Yes. At your service, sir. A patient, I understand," depositing a small sachel on a chair, and glancing covertly toward the bed—then wiping his half-bald pate with a copious silk handkerchief of flaming crimson.

"Yes; a wounded man."

"Ah!" producing a case of surgical instruments, "a bullet-hole to probe, I suppose?"

"No—a knife-cut, and a sore one. There he is."

"Um!—yes. Ring for warm water. How long ago did it happen?"

"Last night," replied the stabler, jerking the tassel from the bell-cord, as he gave it a vigorous pull.

"Ahem! I'll look at him," after some moments' fumbling in the small valise, out of which he took sponge, linen, plaster, needle and thread, he went to the bedside.

"This wound has been neglected," pursued the medical worthy, with a dubious, yet fussy movement, "neglected, or it wouldn't be so bad. Um! Inflammation going on—considerable fever. Ahem!"

"Do you want help there?" inquired Thadlis, when the water was brought, and while the stumpy man was bathing the cut.

"Oh, no; not a particle. No help."

"Then I'll leave you," and with the blunt speech Thadlis quitted the apartment—frowning, and mumbling as he moved along the hall: "As I thought: when he needs health most, he is sick. Yet he can not help it. May the mips seize Jules Willowold and his knife! Now, then, this must be the room." Pausing and scanning a door before him.

He meant to find out whether it was indeed Stella Bellerayon whose voice he had heard, and rightly judged that he had gone the distance to the point from where he had distinguished the words of inquiry addressed recently to the servant.

"If it is Stella Bellerayon, she is in this room. How, in the fiend's name, came she at the back of the house, though, and so quickly? But, let us take a look," bending low, and placing an eye to the keyhole.

As he viewed the exterior, he beheld his prey seated at a table, partaking of the refreshments that had been left for her when she should awaken.

Thadlis hurriedly glanced up and down the entry. No one was in sight, not a footfall broke the stillness of his surrounding.

Satisfied now, beyond a doubt, that it was Stella Bellerayon, and no longer tasking his brain with what was, to him, an enigmatical change in her locality, he resolved upon a bold stroke. Laying hold upon the knob, he wrenched open the door and strode in—banging the door shut behind him, and grinning exultantly.

At sight of him, Stella sprung to her feet. A scream rose to her lips—to perish in a throes of weakness, and she gasped:

"Oh, Heaven!" staring wildly, and with blood icing.

"I am after you, my beauty!" he growled, and the grin was supplanted by a scowl and leer. "Silence, there, or I shall choke you in a minute—"

"Keep off, you wretch!" as Thadlis strode toward her.

"Oh, I'll keep off. Ho! ho! Look now: none of your squalls—it's no use. You are caught, my charmer. Come," and having advanced to within an arm's length of her—as she stood trembling, riveted as if by some hor-



rible fascination—he reached out one of his coarse hands to grasp her.

"You ran away pretty easily, my dear," trying to whine tantalizingly with his guttural voice, "but your gay lover wasn't quite sharp enough," and here he chuckled as his thick, horny fingers felt on her bare arm.

The touch, like a barb of steel, aroused her.

"Back! Back!" she cried, snatching up a knife from among the plates, and poising it aloft. "Off with your vile hold! You shall not take me! I am free! I will die before you shall bury me again! Stand back!" and as she flourished the glistening steel in his face, he ducked his head, retreating a step and blurring an oath.

"By Satan!—you eat! You are at your knife tricks again! Had, there! I have you—you can not escape me!"

Stella had bounded to the window, as though she intended to leap forth, reckless of the consequences; but Thadlis was so close upon her that she was forced to turn.

Again she flourished the knife, and again the stabler recoiled.

"Help! Help!" she screamed. "Back, you fiend!—touch me not; at your own peril, dare to come nigher!"

"Drop that knife!" he roared.

"Hands off! Heaven pardon me! I will take my life, sooner than fall into your clutches. H—!"

Thadlis launched himself upon her, despite the rapid, gleaming circles made by the knife. And in that moment—overcome to madness by the terror of her situation, perceiving that he was about to overpower her, and preferring death rather than captivity—she breathed a quick word of prayer, and raised the edge of the blade to her fair throat.

Simultaneously the head, shoulders and body of a man appeared above the window sill, on the outside, and an arm darted in to arrest the suicidal stroke.

"Don't do that!" cried a voice; and Stella, as she felt a set of iron fingers clasp her wrist, and she felt the hot breath of the ruffian on her face, sunk insensible to the floor.

"Ho! it is Jules Willoughby!" shouted the stabler, as the man started to climb into the apartment.

"Yes, it is Jules Willoughby. I have a matter to settle with you, Thadlis. Now, we'll have it out."

"By the devil! we shall see about that—accursed clerk of an apothecary!" roared Thadlis, throwing himself, like a charging bull, onto Jules Willoughby.

The assailant was taken at a disadvantage, being only partly inside the window, and under the necessity of steadying himself with one hand, while he resisted the attack with the other.

Thadlis strained every muscle of his enormous frame. He knew well that Jules Willoughby would show him no mercy, if victorious; he felt assured that he would kill him, without scruple, in settlement for the murderous blow delivered on the night of the abduction of Elise De Martine, ten years ago, and for the part he (Thadlis) had played in that affair.

Nerved, therefore, by a fear for his life, coupled to the natural hate for the man who was his deadly enemy, owing to past antagonisms, he fought like a giant devil, enraged, grunting, growling, cursing his foe while the two were wrapped in a fierce tug.

Presently, Thadlis drew back his clenched fist. He centered a mighty strength in the loosened arm—then the fist fell, like a sledge, between the eyes of his adversary.

Jules Willoughby uttered a despairing cry. The blow partially stunned him; he swung helplessly outward, grasping at air, and went plunging down among the bushes and vines beneath.

The cry might have been heard and induced inquiry; but, just as the fist of the stabler dealt the terrible stroke, the great tavern bell echoed, like a claxon, through the halls and out on the air, summoning the guests and boarders to dinner—it being then eleven o'clock, and the customary hour for the noon meal, which lasted from eleven till one.

Having disposed of the man who had interfered with his plan to capture Stella Bellerayon, Thadlis retired, pausing in the window, wiping the perspiration from his blazing face.

The struggle had been short but furious. "There!" he exclaimed, "his neck is broken. So much for his meddling. May the imps get his soul! I am glad he is out of the way. But he is not out of the way yet—and here he returned to the window and looked over the sill down at the motionless body." By Satan! I must hide that carcass somewhere, or I may be hanged for murder! I will attend to my employer's beauty first, and the apothecary's clerk afterward. Now, then, to make her fast!

Pulling the quilt from the bed, he tore it into strips, which he twisted tightly; and with these strips he bound the arms and limbs of Stella Bellerayon, who had not yet recovered from her faint of horror. Near the hearth lay several pieces of wood intended for kindling, and one of these he fashioned into a rude gag, with the aid of a dinner-knife from the tray.

By the time he had completed the operation of securing her, Stella opened her eyes.

"Ho! awake again," he grunted. "You see—you beautiful cat—I have you safe in my claws again. Who do you think it was that kept the knife from your throat? Ho! it was Jules Willoughby. I had a fight with him, and pitched him headlong from the window. Ha! ha! ha!—but that reminds me of two things: the body below needs attention; and this other meddler—who looks like the apothecary's clerk—may return at any minute. I will have to change your quarters, my charmer. See how nicely I have fixed you!—so that you will not run off again, nor squall for help, nor call me by hard names. So far, so good. And no more to fear from Jules Willoughby. Ha! ha! ha!"

Stella could not speak, because of the gag that nearly choked her, neither could she move hand or foot, so securely had he bound her. But her lustrous eyes flashed defiance at him, even in her utter helplessness—the glance of an unconquerable spirit, more brave when most at the mercy of a relentless brute.

Thadlis was particularly gleeful over his summary disposition of Jules Willoughby. He chuckled in his coarse, guttural style, as he took Stella in his brawny arms and bore her away.

Bounding to a room opposite, he laid her on a bed there, and withdrew, saying, "I'll bid you good-by for a while"—popping his shaggy head while his thick lips parted over his yellow teeth, in a taunting grin. "Sorry to leave you alone, charmer. I'll be back soon, and take you to Willowd—a nice place, that Willowd, you know. Ha! ha! ha!"

Thus transferring the unfortunate Stella Bellerayon to another apartment, in order to conceal her from those parties who were bearing her to Nashville until he could further arrange, according to a plan already conceived, for her removal from the tavern—and having secured her beyond all likelihood of escape, or even the capability of giving an alarm—he descended to the garden, to look after Jules Willough-

by, who, it would appear, must certainly be dead after that high and fearful fall.

## CHAPTER XXI.

AND CROSIER HASTENS HIS SCHEME.

THE lovely woman was not long unconscious in the arms of Varian Crosier. Sprinkling her face with water from the pitcher which Worth Wynder hurriedly grasped up from the center-table, and bathing her temples with a wetted handkerchief, they soon roused her from her sudden faint.

She opened her eyes dreamily, gazed upward into the features that leaned so close, so eager to hers; then, drooping the long-lashed lids, she breathed, in a tremor of bliss:

"Jules! Dear Jules!"

"Captain," whispered the slim humanity, who was behind the pair, and therefore out of view, "this is Elise De Martine. This is the mark identical with that in the picture—the mole, captain, the mole."

Wynder spoke like one who scarce believes the evidence of his own senses. That it was impossible for Elise De Martine to be alive, he had felt firmly convinced; but the reader may conceive that this was, in reality, the missing Elise, who was then on her course to confront those who had wronged her, accompanied by the husband of Mary Dyle, who had rescued her from Danger Island and the wild man Peter Wilder. And on her temple was the tiny purple mole, which, combined with her extraordinary and peculiar beauty, identified her as the original of the ivory-tinted picture so jealously cherished by Varian Crosier.

His exclamation, though, was lost upon Crosier, who, when he saw her revived, had neither eyes nor ears for anything save her face and her murmurings.

As she uttered the three words, she seemed to sink into the languor of a delicious joy—joy at meeting one whom she thought to be her lover, after the long and tortuous separation of years—and it was as much as he could do, to control himself, to force an appearance of calmness which he was far from feeling; for he thought:

"It is as I said: the effect of the drug is dispelled. She is completely herself—and she still takes me for that Jules Willoughby. Ha! ha! ha! I swim—I am burning! It is delicious! There will be no difficulty in persuading her to marry me. Excellent!" Then aloud: "My dear Elise! my beautiful queen!"

"Oh, Jules! this is a sweetness I had not dared to hope for."

"Yes, it is sweet!"

"By a providence of God, we are united at last."

"A miracle!" he exclaimed, with fervor, glancing rapturously down into the lustrous eyes of the deceived Elise. "But, tell me," he asked, "how came you to leave the other room?"

"The other room?" she repeated, surprisedly.

Wynder pulled his captain's coat-tail by jerks.

Hang his lunacy! he'll lose her, if he don't look out. He has found the true Elise, and don't know the difference. Blind as an owl at midday, too! for he might see that she don't wear the same clothes; nor has he observed the mole."

And Crosier, inwardly:

"Ho! she has forgotten the other room, forgotten that I brought her here, no doubt. I need not remind her of it. I must not overlook the fact that I am Jules Willoughby." And he said: "My dear Elise, I am so overjoyed at this meeting, that I hardly know what I am saying. How beautiful you look! Come—let us sit down. How happy we are now, ah!"

He led her to a sofa, while he trembled in his exultation at finding her so easily deceived. And it was not natural for Elise to be mistaken in imagining him to be her lover, for we will state here, that Varian Crosier precisely resembled Jules Willoughby as the latter had looked ten years before—with, perhaps, the few marks of age—and as Willoughby also appeared at the date of our story—he having regained his natural mien, and wearing whiskers at the time of his wooing Elise, though he was somewhat haggard still from the effect of his long imprisonment in the house of the chemist, in Paris.

Crosier could scarce master his emotions, as he twined one arm round his neck, gazing at him so confidently.

Not until they were seated, did she notice Worth Wynder; and she put a similar inquiry to that of Stella Bellerayon in the prison vault.

"Who is that, dear Jules?"

"He is a faithful fellow, my dear Elise, who was with me in the Crimea War. I have not heard of it—yet stay; the generous man who rescued me has, I think, told me of some terrible scenes in Europe recently."

"Yes, I mentioned it before—that is, I dreamed I had found you and told you all about it," he corrected quickly, thinking she must refer to his former introduction of Wynder, in the cellars, which she indistinctly remembered, and in pursuance of his resolve not to allude to the scene of the night before, at Willowd. And he added: "A trusty rascal—friend, I mean, my dear Elise, who will do us any service. His name is Worth Wynder."

"As a friend of Jules, I am glad to know you, Mr. Wynder," and Elise held out her hand to Worth, who glided forward like an eel, to clasp it and stoop over it respectfully.

"You were in the Crimea war, which you speak of, dear Jules?" she queried, as Wynder withdrew to a window.

"Yes—through a season of carnage and terrors. What had I to live for, since I was robbed of my Elise, the only thing I loved in the world. You disappeared so mysteriously on the very night we were to run away and be married! First, I thought you had deserted me; but I could not believe that. I searched for you, and, in my despair, determined to seek a soldier's grave. I went into the Crimea; but I could not kill myself—no, I could not die."

"And I, dear Jules, have suffered more than you can credit. What an unhappy lot has been mine, since the night of my abduction! Clinging tighter to his neck, she sunk her head to his breast and half smothered a sob.

"Sblood!" thought the vagabond, as he felt the soft embrace of her arms, and caught the sound of the sob. "I am being fast tickled to death! I shall bark and yelp presently! How affectionate she is! What an hour for a wife! And she thinks she was abducted. She did not know she was at Willowd all the time!"

Contemplating the regal head on his breast, he slyly wound an arm round her waist, giving Wynder a wink, and rolling his tongue into his cheek.

"Where is the ring you promised to wear forever for me, Jules?" she asked, suddenly, looking up.

"The ring! Oh, the infernal ring I tore from the finger of the man Alick Cassin had in the cell. She wants it now—a while ago, she detected it." Then to her: "It is safe, safe, my adored Elise!" producing the ring and slipping it on her finger.

"Ah! I feared you had lost it. Let me tell you now, dear Jules, what I have endured in these fearful years—without seeing you, yet knowing that you still loved me if you were alive; for you swore, by that ring, that no one should share your affection for me."

"I have worshiped you to distraction for ten years!" he assured her, vehemently. "But, you need not tell me about yourself; I know all—I knew every thing, except where to find you, and that is why I sought to destroy myself."

"How did you find out, Jules?"

"Through Alick Cassin, who is now dead."

"Ah! your employer. He, too, opposed our marriage, and gave me over to Peter Wilder."

"Peter Wilder! Who the dogs is Peter Wilder?" exclaimed Crosier, mentally, who had already half forgotten the story of the bearded man, because of his firm conviction that the matter was a mere tangled fabrication; and he had entirely abandoned his resolution to seek out the woman the bearded man had brought to the tavern, and make her confess herself an adventuress—devoting himself absently to the true Elise, our pursuers have discovered Stella Bellerayon—come upon her while she was eating, wrapped her up in the quilt, and given her chloroform besides. She has not been taken without a struggle; and this drop of blood, and this stain—picking up the knife, on the blade of which he showed a stain, like a single, streaking spurt from a small artery—"these bear witness to her bravery and resistance. Don't you see?"

The drop of blood on the sill, and the stain on the knife, were from the hand of Jules Willoughby, who had slightly wounded him when he stayed the intended stroke of the blade across the throat of Stella Bellerayon. "You lie—you dog—you lie!" he snarled, harshly. "There is but one Elise. Stella Bellerayon and Elise De Martine are the same person. I shall break your neck if you dare to gainsay it!"

"Depend upon it," Wynder hastened to say, "I shall not dispute the fact. To satisfy you, I herewith affirm that they are one and the same person," adding inwardly: "The lunatic may go on. I am tired of trying to show him his folly. He is as crazy as a bug," and aloud again, suddenly: "But, look there, captain!"

Crosier followed the direction of his finger. They saw the burly Thadlis at the far side of the garden, moving stealthily and skulking behind occasional bushes.

"That rascal of a stabler!" exclaimed Crosier. "What is that he has on his shoulder?"

"A man," said Wynder.

"And a dead man, I should judge. Ho! what is he doing now?"

Thadlis halted at an old, unused well that was in one of the far corners of the garden. He placed his burden on the huge pall that was there, and bound it fast with some remnants of the quilt strips which he had brought along.

Having lashed the body to the iron handle of the bucket and to the knot of the rope above the handle, he began slowly unwinding the windlass; and when the rope was all paid out, he severed it with a gleaming knife.

"Sblood! he has put a man down the well—a dead man! Who can it be?"

Wynder's eyes were keener than Varian Crosier's in this instance. He had recognized the face of the inanimate body as that of Jules Willoughby, or the man he had seen in the kitchen, at Willowd, and since on the arrival of the stage, and whom he had heard his captain anatomize as Jules Willoughby. But he said nothing.

Thadlis turned away from the well, and approached the house—watched by Varian Crosier and Worth Wynder: watched by a third party, for the short, fat, shrewd-faced doctor, happening to be at the window of the room in which lay Wilse De Martine, detected the whole suspicious proceeding of the stabler.

"The rascal has murdered somebody!" resolved the diminutive physician; "and I shall take care that he does not leave the tavern until we have thoroughly overhauled him."

Just then, Crosier and Wynder heard the dull blast of a horn, sounding as if at the front of the house, and some distance up the road. The noise of the horn had scarce died out, when they heard a thump! thump! thump! in the hall.

"Sblood! it is the man with a beard. Shut the door—quick!"

Wynder closed the door to a crack, and through the crack he poked his nose to watch the bearded man go past.

"Ha! ha! it's the stage. The officers have come," Wynder heard him say, to himself, as he thumped his wooden leg along the passage.

"Captain."

"The stage has arrived."

"The stage!" echoed Crosier in surprise, "what stage?"

"Bound for up-country, I suppose, from Nashville."

"But it is not due till three o'clock, and now 'tis not more than thirty minutes after eleven. It cannot be the stage," and he glanced at his watch-dial.

"Yours truly. But you've forgotten a little item."

"Forgotten?—what?"

"You told me the bearded man said there would be officers out here in the next stage. A few dollars, you know, considering the business they're on—"

"Yes, to carry out the plan of some miserable adventuress who has concocted a story to prove herself Elise De Martine."

Exactly. That may have brought the stage ahead of time," concluded Wynder. "Take my advice, captain, and marry your Elise as quickly as possible."

"Yes, we will not delay a minute. When she is my wife, then we shall confound the adventuress, whoever she is, and spoil the plot of this man-with-a-beard—death on him! Come. Follow me. 'Sblood!"

Crosier jerked open the door and strode away.

As he turned into the entry leading to the forward staircase—turned sharp and swift—he came face to face with the burly stabler, Thadlis.

(To be continued—Commenced in No.

"Hang it, captain! I don't understand," he said, coming forward. "I see she ate heartily"—noting the disarranged viands on the tray, "and dropped her knife"—pointing to the knife which Stella had essayed to use on her own throat, "and what has she done with her bed-quilt?"—marking the absence of the quilt, "and what is this?"—finally going to the window, and bending to look at a blood-stain;

"blood, captain—here's blood, by Jupiter!"

"Sdeath! what can that mean?" exclaimed Crosier, advancing, and also examining a single drop of blood that was still fresh on the sill.

"Captain, the whole thing is very plain to me—"

"Ho! it is plain to you! Well, what does that blood-mark mean, hey, rascal?"

"I told you that our pursuers were on our heels. You told me that the bearded man said he had found Elise De Martine, and brought her to the tavern. Now, while you have stumbled upon the true Elise, our pursuers have discovered Stella Bellerayon—come upon her while she was eating, wrapped her up in the quilt, and given her chloroform besides. She has not been taken without a struggle; and this drop of blood, and this stain—picking up the knife, on the blade of which he showed a stain, like a single, streaking spurt from a small artery—"these bear witness to her bravery and resistance. Don't you see?"

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(To be continued—Commenced in No.

## A Telegraph Operator's Story.

BY HENRI MONTCALEM.

DURING the winter of 1869 I was employed as night-operator in the railroad office at D—, Iowa. The principal road between Chicago and Omaha runs through D—, and the great number of irregular night trains and constant danger of collision resulting therefrom, rendered the position of night-operator by no means an easy one. It may be well to mention here—as necessary to the following story—that, beside the railroad office, there was also at D— a business-office of the Union Company. This we always spoke of as the "down-town office."

One stormy night not far from eleven o'clock, I sat at my desk—and for a wonder, idle. The wires had not called me for some time, and I was leaning back in my chair listening to the wind outside and reflecting upon the loneliness

of my situation. The eastern train had crossed the river more than an hour ago; all the depot officials had gone off home, and so far as I knew I was entirely alone in the vast building.

Finally, tired of thinking, I picked up the evening paper and glanced listlessly over its columns. Among other things I read the detailed account of a fearful tragedy that had taken place fifty miles up the river on the previous night. Three raftsmen, well known as desperate characters in that vicinity, had entered the cottage of one Matthews, a farmer living in an isolated spot—had butchered the farmer and his children, terribly maltreated his wife, and then departed as they came, having taken with them whatever plunder was handy. What interested me most was a full description, for purposes of identification, of the chief of the villainous trio, Tim Lynch. Here it is:

\$500 REWARD he paid for information leading to the capture, dead or alive, of Tim Lynch, the ringleader of the Matthews tragedy. Lynch is a remarkably large man, six feet four inches in height, very heavy, and broad across the shoulders. Eyes greenish gray, with a deep scar over the right eye. Hair wiry, black, and heavy beard of same color. When last seen he was dressed in black Kosuth hat, faded army overcoat, pants of gray jean and heavy boots. The above reward will be paid to any furnishing positive information of his whereabouts.

(Signed) Sheriff of — County.

At the very instant I finished reading this advertisement, there occurred the most remarkable coincidence that has ever come under my observation. I heard a heavy tread on the stairs, and then the door opened and set eyes on him I recognized him as perfectly as though I had known him all his life. The army overcoat and gray pants tucked in the heavy boots, the massive frame and shoulders, the slouch hat pulled down over his right eye to conceal—I was sure—the scar, above all a desperate, hunted look in his forbidding countenance—all were not to be mistaken. I was as certain of his identity as though he had stepped forward, pulled off his hat to show the scar, and told me his name.

To say I was not alarmed at this sudden and unwelcome intrusion would be untrue. I am not a brave man, and my present situation, alone in the depot with a hunted murderer, was by no means reassuring. My heart beat violently; but from mere force of habit I arose and asked him to be seated. While he turned to comply I succeeded in conquering my agitation to some extent. He drew a chair noisily forward, and sitting down threw open his coat, displaying by so doing a heavy navy revolver stuck in his belt. Then he freed his mouth of a quantity of tobacco-juice, and spoke:

"Young feller," he said, motioning with his head toward the battery, "thet thar masheen is whet yer call a tellygram, I s'pose?"

"Well," I answered, with a faint smile, intended to be conciliatory, "that's what we send tellygrams by."

"Wal, I want yer ter send a message to a friend o' mine out in Cohoe. I tell yer forehand I ain't got no collater. But I kinder guess you'd better trust me, young feller. (Here he laid his hand significantly on his belt.) I'll fetch it in ter-morrow if it's convenient."

I hastened to say that the charge could just as well be paid at the other end by his friend.

"Umph! Plaguey little you'll git out o' Jim, I reckon. Howsunder, perced."

"What is the message, and



## A Moderate Drinker.

BY HAP HAZARD.

"Dear Charles—"  
"Nonsense, Nettie!"  
"For my sake!"

She laid her hand on his arm and gazed pleadingly into his face. For a moment the eloquent glance held him by its magnetism, and he looked seriously down into her eyes' clear depths. Then he encircled her waist with his arm and drew her gently to him. With a swelling heart he bent over her and pressed a fond kiss upon her unresisting lips.

"For your sake?" he repeated. "I would do anything for your sake!" And then, in a lighter tone: "But do you think me so weak?" "But their very strength proves fatal to so many! The only true safety is flight."

"Flight?"  
He drew up his six feet of noble manhood with proud consciousness.

Nettie, gazing at his broad shoulders and deep chest, firm-set lips and commanding brow, could not withhold a woman's homage to powerful and symmetrically-developed physique, combined with manly courage. Love and exultant admiration were depicted on every lineament of her expressive countenance. The strong emotion irradiated her face so as to make it almost luminous. Involuntarily her lover sunk upon one knee with uncovered head and kissed her hand.

"My queen! My goddess!" he murmured, in turn bowing before the impersonation of feminine loveliness.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!"  
Nettie started and jerked her hand away, blushing guiltily. Charles rose to his feet and turned, with a defiant smile, in the direction whence the voice came.

In the path, a few feet distant, stood teasing Maud Tracy, with her hands before her face in mock confusion, the fingers wide apart, and the roguish eyes glancing merrily through the interstices.

"I only looked up to say that dinner was waiting. Indeed, Nettie, I didn't mean to see, and I put my hands before my eyes so quickly that I saw only a little, dear—just a little, and I couldn't help it, you know; and I won't tell anybody—oh, not now!"

"I'll kiss you, too; and then you will have more to tell," laughed Charles, springing toward her.

"Not if the court knows itself; and we think it does!" said Maud, with a grimace, and ran down the path, looking back over her shoulder and laughing provokingly.

Charles drew through his own arm the arm of his blushing lady-love, and led her to the house with an air of proprietorship.

After dinner he went out on the lawn and lay down in the cool shade of one of the century-old oaks, to smoke and dream over the happy future stretching out before him.

After the light comes the shadow.  
It was near the close of election day. Party spirit had run high, and poor whisky and never-failing beer had proved, as usual, efficacious in bringing conviction to the mind of the intelligent public. On every hand the opposition was being routed, and the triumphant candidates were jubilant over their anticipated success.

Arm in arm with a couple of "Jolly Dogs" as supporters, Charles passed down the street in a somewhat devious course. His hat was of the worse for the weight of the foot of one of his "supporters," in trying to rescue it when it had blown from his head; and his untied cravat, and a lock of hair which fell down over his forehead, added to his air of evident intoxication.

Turning a corner brought them face to face with Nettie Allworth, who was promenading with a lady friend.

A moment Nettie stopped, with a half-suppressed cry of dismay and pain. Then, with the blood tingling to the tips of her ears, and dyeing face and neck crimson, she drew her friend hastily away down the street.

At home she rushed to her room and threw herself on the bed in an agony of tears, her breast racked by a thousand conflicting emotions—shame and wounded love, indignation and sorrowing tenderness, and beneath all an undercurrent of undefined terror.

As for Charles, one glance of her reproachful eyes had sobered him. With a muttered excuse, he detached himself from his companions, and left them staring after him with that look of stupid bewilderment, which, on the face of a drunken man, would be so ludicrous were it not for its sad significance.

Charles walked the floor of his rooms in a very perturbed state of mind. What if she should break with him! With the reflection, a fierce pain shot through his heart.

He hastily drew pen and paper before him, but he was too much agitated for connected thought, and the letter was a curious medley of deprecation and self-abasement, of promises and protestations, and shame and love.

"Don't throw me overboard," it ran. "I know I ought to hang for it; but I shall go to the dogs if you give me up, and your love can save me. Oh, believe me, my love for you is strong enough to keep me from a repetition of my accursed stupidity! Nettie! dear Nettie! I'll do anything, promise anything, only don't cast me off!" etc.

He resumed his anxious walk in the parlor of her home, when the servant had taken up his note. The minutes dragged like years, haunted by a thousand fears. Into fifteen minutes was crowded more of misery than Charles had ever dreamed a man could suffer. At the end of that time the door opened noiselessly and she stood within the room.

The reaction from his gloomy forebodings was so powerful that, with a great cry of relief and delight, he sprang toward her and threw himself at her feet.

She had prepared herself to administer condign punishment; but, at sight of the self-abasement of the kneeling man, all her virtuous resolves fled, and she thought only of his shame and contrition and of her love. It ended as it always does with a true woman. She forgave him, and he was profuse in unbounded promises and extravagant protestations; and the next hour was the happiest of their lives.

"The pledge! Now, Nettie!"  
"But Charles—"  
"Why, I have no appetite for liquor! I never drank but for the sake of sociability and good fellowship. I can make my excuses in the future, without telling the world that I am a naughty boy, and not to be trusted with the pretty wine!"

He was trying to laugh it off. A tear gathered in Nettie's eye, as if she was but half-satisfied. But he kissed it away and silenced further remonstrance by saying:

"There! There! You have my promise. Is not that enough?"

"Ha! ha! ha! The little woman at home!"  
The speaker elevated his eyebrows with a quiet smile, as he glanced over his sparkling wine at the flushed face of Charles Kennedy.

"Bah!" cried another; "Charles's not on the hen-pecked list yet, I'll warrant you. Come, old fellow; you mustn't go back on the Jolly Dogs. Here's to the little woman at home!"

"May her eyes be as bright  
And her heart as light  
As the wine in our goblets brimming!"

"Really, gentlemen, you must excuse me. I feel disinclined to drink this evening. In fact, I'm not right well."

"Nonsense! This is the elixir of life!"  
"To the little wife! Fill!"  
"But, gentlemen—"  
"Fill!" Fill!" shouted a number of voices, in chorus.

The wine sparkled; the glasses clinked; the air rung with hilarity on every side. Charles Kennedy hesitated. How hard it was to face the ridicule he saw curling the lips and sparkling in the eyes of those thoughtless bacchanals!

"I have no wife  
To bother my life—"  
"Put a stopper on that jackdaw!"  
"The toast! The toast!"

"No more debate! My whistle is so dry, now, it's just ready to crack!"  
"Fill! Fill! To the little wife at home!"  
"It must be the last," said Charles, more in apology to the inward monitor than to his wild companions. And with a deep blush at his own weakness he drank the toast.

Ten years! What may not happen in so long a time?  
It is a cruel night. The wind chases the frightened snowflakes down the deserted street with a howl of rage. It snatches the hat from the head of a poor drunken wretch, whose uncertain steps baffle his endeavors to recover it. He gives over the vain pursuit with a muttered curse, and drawing his rags closer about him, plods on down the street.

With a blow of his foot he throws upon the door of a miserable hovel, which, from its dilapidated condition, is wholly unfit for human habitation. Standing on the threshold, he balances himself on his unsteady legs and gazes with an angry frown upon the occupants of the wretched room.

One is a woman, whose haggard face and sorrow-haunted eyes tell the too common tale. In her arms is clasped a lad of nine. Little need to tell what has pinched his body, and given painful prominence to his large, spiritual eyes.

Alas! that he should have learned to shrink from his father with fear and trembling! Yet, so it is; and at his approach the child springs to the arms of his mother and hides his face in her bosom. But how impotent are her poor arms to protect the creature to whom her heart clings with such yearning love!

"Why the devil isn't that brat in bed?"  
The harsh voice sends a shudder of dread through the slight frame. With a prayer in her heart, the mother raises her beseeching eyes to the face of the monster she is forced to own as the father of her boy.

"Charles, don't blame—"  
"Come to me!" commands the father, interrupting her.

The mother whispers something in the ear of the lad, and urges him to obedience, taught by sad experience to propitiate the demon in his present mood at any cost. But the child clings to his mother with a terrified cry.

"Do you teach him to be afraid of me?" yells the drunken wretch, in a fury of rage. And striding across the room, he grasps the shrinking child by the arm and wrenches him away from the now terrified mother. The lad is thrown from his feet, and falls heavily, his head coming in violent contact with the stove, and a little stream of blood is beginning to trickle from a wound in the temple.

With a wild scream the mother springs forward and falls prostrate on the body of her murdered child.

"Charles! Charles! What's the matter?"  
She shakes him as violently as her strength will permit.

The man, only half aroused, looks at her in bewilderment.

"What is the matter with you, Charles, dear?"  
He raises to a sitting posture. He wipes the cold sweat from his brow, and gazes at her, still with no sign of recognition.

The woman begins to cry.  
"Charles—dear Charles! don't you know me? I am Nettie—Nettie!"

The man begins to tremble. He has been gazing about him—on the green lawn and stately oaks, and lastly on the remains of a half-consumed cigar that has soiled his garments with its ashes. He has seen his eyes return to her face, and he repeats after her:

"Nettie! Nettie!"  
She caresses his cheek, and places her face against his, calling him by endearing epithets.

With a great sob he clasps her in his arms; and pressing her closer and closer to his throbbing heart, murmurs:

"Thank God!"  
"What is it, Charles?" she whispers, wondering to feel the hot tears fall upon her face.

But for the time he can only hold her in his close embrace, and repeat:

"Thank God! Thank God!"  
When his emotions have somewhat abated, he holds her at arm's length, and gazes on her fresh young beauty. He strokes her silken hair, and passes his hand over the satin surface of her cheek. Then with a swelling heart he clasps her to his breast again, and covers her face anew with kisses.

"Oh, Nettie! Nettie!" he cries. "Thank God! it is only a dream. It is as if I were permitted to begin again a mispent life. And may God judge me as I heed the lesson!"

## Weekly Budget.

THE HUMAN WONDER.

The recent death of Chang and Eng, the Siamese twins, renders this a proper occasion for recalling the history and nature of the *human nature*, which has no parallel in the records of the human race.

The Siamese Twins, as the term implies, were natives of Siam, and were born in 1811, consequently at the time of their death they were sixty-two years of age. In 1827, when eighteen years of age, they came to this country. Their parents were farmers on the coast of Siam, and of the lowest order of that people. The peculiarity of their physical formation, was a broad connecting band of flesh, uniting them by the xiphoid region of the breast. This was about a foot in length, two inches broad, and four inches thick, and through it ran a large artery and many veins, making their circulation identical. The band of flesh was flexible, and possessed a sufficient faculty of extension to allow the twins to face each other, and to stand back to back. Their breathing when asleep was simultaneous, but when awake was subject to the individual will. They seemed to be masters of their own physical feelings and sensations without regard to the other, but they shared in the pain caused by punching or

otherwise injuring the center of the fleshy ligament. It is said, although it has been denied, that to a great degree their joys, sorrows, anger, mutual pain and desires were the same. But it is very certain that they differed greatly in temperament, and mental physical development. For a long time they were subject to the investigations of scientific men, with a view to a successful separation, but there were none of all who visited them, in America, England or France, who felt assured that in such an event life could be preserved, and they dragged out the sixty-two years of their existence thus firmly linked by nature, and even in death they were not divided.

Barnum obtained them in 1850, and they became great celebrities. For years they were exhibited at the old museum, on the corner of Broadway and Ann street, the site now occupied by the *Harold* building, in New York city. At that time they spoke English very imperfectly. They were below the average size, although Chang was much the larger. Although the intelligence possessed by both was but of the lowest order, nevertheless Chang was the mental superior of his brother. Chang was robust and strong; Eng was weak and often sick. Chang was good-natured and cheerful, and not without a certain perception of humor. Eng was peevish, morose and given to finding fault. It is said that the two did not always agree, and indeed there is a tradition that hearing a row in the room they occupied in the old museum building in Ann street, Barnum went there to find out the meaning of it—to discover that the two Siamese brethren were engaged in a vigorous game of fisticuffs. Eng was the under dog, and Chang was in a fair way to choke him to death. It is further related that the great showman attempted to make peace. He couldn't separate them, and with the usual result he got badly thrashed himself.

As a rule, however, Chang submitted to the April moods of his brother without dissent. They learned to play checkers together, and passed much of their leisure time in that way. Their personal appearance was very repulsive—nothing attractive either in face or figure. Their salary during their contract with Barnum was a hundred dollars a week, and this sum they equally divided and placed in a savings bank. They remained with Barnum until 1855, and it was then believed that they had managed to accumulate \$40,000 apiece. Having then been in show life twenty-four years, this is not remarkable, since their salaries were always large and their expenses comparatively nothing. At this time they retired from public life. During their travels they had visited North Carolina, and the climate and the locality pleasing them, they located there, and, with their joint property of eighty thousand dollars, purchased two plantations at Mount Airy, near Salisbury. At this time they were bachelors of forty-four. One would suppose, under the circumstances, that Cupid would have passed them over. But such is not the case. At forty-four years of age Chang and Eng married.

It may be supposed that the two curiosities were smitten with two fair damsels who returned their loves. But unfortunately for romance it is not true. There was none of the usual love-making, soft pressure of the hand on the sly, or love notes, whispered shyly. On the contrary, it was one of the most prosaic of match makings. Chang and Eng wanted to settle down to practical life. They wanted wives and were not very particular as to who they were so long as they would marry them. The finding of wives was no easy matter. While Chang and Eng were willing to take anybody who would present themselves, to the credit of woman be it said, every one applied to refused to be allied to such monstrosities. However, a long search was rewarded. Two Lancashire lasses, who had seen the twins in London at a show, but who never had been seen by the brothers, were found willing to enter into the married state with their firmly-brothered husbands. Correspondence brought the match about, and the two English girls were prevailed upon to come to America. Before they left England, the twins had chosen of the two their wives by photograph. The marriage was solemnized very quietly in Salisbury, N. C. The wives were not specimens of English beauty, but they were strong, healthy, and able to work, for they were servants, and so they suited their husbands.

Their domestic arrangements, it can be imagined, were peculiar to themselves. They lived upon different plantations. One week Chang lived with Eng at his plantation, and the next, Eng with Chang. Each brother, during the week's residence at his own home, conducted the business of the farm, without the interference of, though often with the advice of the other. The wives lived entirely at their respective homes. One may comprehend the strangeness of this relation, when one thinks of the confidence between man and wife. As is not altogether unusual, the sisters in law quarreled, and now, you woman who cherishes a cordial dislike for your sister-in-law, think of the torture Mrs. Chang was compelled to submit to since she could never find her husband alone where she could pour into his sympathizing ear the story of the crimes and the meannesses of Mrs. Eng. Never don a shawl, and never had been seen by the brothers, were found willing to enter into the married state with their firmly-brothered husbands.

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public, and appeared at Wood's Museum. But they were not as successful as they had hoped to be. This failure was due to several causes. One of which was their rapacity, which made it difficult for managers to deal with them. Again, their power of attraction was gone, and they had become old, and wrinkled and thin. Their misfortunes had soured them with the world, and they constantly quarreled with each other. They should have been, however, more attractive, since they had gained much intelligence, and could converse in a satisfactory manner with their visitors. Their burden of conversation, however, was a lament over the necessity which had driven them back again to show-life and the injustice the North had heaped upon the South.

This latter complaint continually sounded, did not increase their popularity. More than that there was a greater curiosity before the public of a similar nature, then exciting public attention, and that was a two-headed negro child, or to phrase it another way, two negro children with but one stomach between them.

During their absence the wives managed the affairs of their plantations. They traveled through the country, and finally went to Europe, from whence they returned, about a year ago, and again, with fortunes somewhat improved, settled again in North Carolina.

Their life thereafter was not happy. They grew morose, conversed but little with each other, and were full of gloomy forebodings. This is attributed to the fact, that while in Europe a serious attempt was made to separate them. A number of scientific surgeons were gathered together, and the probable success of a surgical operation discussed. As preliminary experiment, the ligature which bound them was compressed until all circulation of the blood between them was stopped. Eng fainting, and Chang manifested the greatest suffering. To the surgeons this proved that neither could sustain a separate circulation of the blood, and that to cut the ligature would produce death to both. And another fact was apparent, that in the event of the death of one, the other would die too. This fact, however, was concealed from them; nevertheless, their intelligence was great enough to comprehend the serious meaning of the experiment, and they returned to their homes with a dark and gloomy outlook before them.

They were haunted with the fear of the death of the other. After arriving at home Eng's health failed him, and shortly after Chang sustained a shock of paralysis, and life to the brother became unbearable. Much of the time the well brother was compelled to remain in bed with his brother, who was too weak to go about, although the well man was in good health. Eng's health rapidly declined, and he took to drink as a relief from his sufferings.

And now comes the singular part of this story. Chang, who all his life had been the strongest and in the best health, was finally stricken with another attack of paralysis, and after a few days died—on the 17th of this month. Within a few minutes Eng was seriously affected, and becoming delirious, raved wildly. This was followed by stupor, in which he lay for two hours, when he, too, expired.

Thus was the truth of the surgeons' predictions verified. The two singular beings died within a short time of one another. They came into the world joined together; they lived a long life, joined together; they died as they had come, and as they had lived, together.

Thus perished two people, the like of whom there is but one other known instance, and that is the girl, or are the girls, referred to above, who are now exhibiting in Paris.

## Interesting Facts.

THE three-foot narrow-gauge railroad system is rapidly becoming popular in this country, but few people are aware of the fact that since it came in vogue, during the last three or four years, no less than 1,445 miles of narrow-gauge railway have been built in this country, and in Canada, which roads, when completed, will have a mileage of 4,563 miles, while there are 1,291 miles under construction.

THE expedition to Khiva has brought into notice a rival to the celebrated German expedition. The Russian soldiers were fed chiefly on biscuits composed one-third of flour of rye, one-third of beef reduced to powder, and one-third of sauer-kraut reduced to powder. The soldiers are stated to have a great relish for this food, and their good health during the expedition is attributed in great part to the use of it.

NOTHING can convey a more impressive idea of the power of water as a general agent than the wonderful canons of Mexico, Texas, and the Rocky Mountains, where the torrents may be seen rushing along, through the incision it has cut for itself in the hard rock, at a depth of several thousand feet between perpendicular walls. The greatest of these canons, that of Colorado, is 298 miles in length, and its sides rise perpendicularly to a height of 5,000 or 6,000 feet.

ACCORDING to a recently published statement, there are 448 theaters in Italy, 397 in France, 191 in Germany, 168 in Spain, 152 in Austria, 150 in England, 44 in Russia, 34 in Belgium, 23 in Holland, 20 in Switzerland, 16 in Portugal, 10 in Sweden, 10 in Denmark, 8 in Norway, 3 in Greece, 4 in Turkey, 3 in Roumania, 3 in Egypt, and 1 in Servia. The general total of dramatic, lyric and musical artists and employes is 2,157,800 women, and 3,027,000 men.

PARIS is substantially fire-proof, without the use of iron girders and beams, iron lathing, or brick or tile floors, by the adoption of a simple method of construction, which is, that there shall be no air-spaces left between floors or between the plaster of walls and the studding wall itself; and that the roof must be covered with tile, slate or metal. There is not such an incendiary thing as a wooden or tar-and-gravel roof in Paris.

THE heat of the sun nowhere penetrates the ocean more than six hundred feet. At a depth of from one to two miles the temperature is everywhere about four degrees below the freezing point, caused probably by the ice water poured into the ocean from the Arctic regions, northern and southern. This, being heavier than the surface water, sinks to the bottom and forms currents ever flowing toward the equator, to take the place of the water which, there heated and rendered lighter, rises to the surface and forms the Gulf and other warm streams. As these flow again toward the Arctic regions, it will be seen that a perpetual circuit is kept up, the Arctic waters continually lessening the heat of the tropical waters, and these in their turn giving out their heat as they flow away from the tropics. England is warmer than Greenland only because of the warmth derived from the Gulf Stream.

A short pause, as though my message occasioned some surprise, and then came the response: "All right!" which assured me that I need not repeat.

"Wal," growled the deep voice of Lynch, "are you goin' to send my message?"  
"I have sent it, sir."

"What! Does all that tickin' mean what I told to you?"  
"Yes, and if you'll wait fifteen or twenty minutes you'll get an answer."

"Wal, I dunno as I want any answer. Jim, he'll understand it all right."

"But I'll tell you soon whether he's there or not. Sit down."

So Lynch reluctantly took his seat, looking around at the door and windows once in awhile in an uneasy way. I was determined to take him now at any cost; and I verily believe I should have planted myself in his path had he insisted upon going now.

"Tick, tick, tick, tick, tick!" the battery called out, and I listened to the message. "Keep cool, Gould has gone for the police." Strange it was, wasn't it? That I should sit there and talk through two hundred and fifty miles of space with a man not half a mile from me.

"What's the signifier?" inquired my companion, as the ticking ceased; and I replied that the clerk at Cohoe had just written off the message and sent it out. He seemed satisfied and settled back in his chair, where he sat in sullen silence, his jaws going up and down, up and down as he chewed his weed.

Oh, how slowly the minutes crept along. The suspense was terrible. I sat and watched the minute-hand of the clock, and five minutes seemed as many months. My companion seemed nervous, too. He moved uneasily in his chair.

"Ain't it 'bout time ye heard from Jim?" he asked, at length.

"We shall get word from him in a few moments now," I answered, and fell to watching the clock again. Five minutes more passed. Lynch got up and began pacing back and forth across the room. At length he paused and said:

"I don't believe I'll wait any more. I've got to see a man down at the Pennsylvania House, and he'll be abed if I don't git round there pretty soon."

"Hold on a moment, and I'll see what they're up to," I cried, hastily, and I touched the key again. "Make haste," was my message. "I shall lose him if you do not. Not a moment to spare." Straightway came the reply, short but encouraging. It gave me fresh courage. "A squad of police started for the depot five minutes ago. Thank Heaven! They ought to be here now. I looked at Lynch and thought of the five hundred dollars."

"Wal, what's the word?" he growled impatiently.

"Your friend is coming," I answered for want of a better reply.

"Comin'! Comin'! Whar?"  
"Coming to the office at Cohoe. He probably has an answer for you."

"An answer for me? Jim Fellers? What should he answer for?" Lynch stood in stupid thought a moment, then he looked at me with a dangerous light in his eye.

"Look a here, young feller," he cried. "It's my private opinin you're lyin' to me. And ef ye are—here he uttered a horrible oath—"I'll cut yer skulkin' heart out. I don't know any thing 'bout that masheen, but I swar Jim Fellers hain't got nothin' to answer. More like he'd git up and scatter when he heered that message."

He stood glaring at me as he uttered these words, his hand on his revolver. I can not account for it. As I before remarked, I am a timid man by nature. But his action only made me bolder. Every thing depended upon keeping him a few seconds longer. It must be done at any cost. I tried a new plan.

"What do you mean, sir?" I shouted, rising, "by coming into this office and talking in that style? Do you think I'll endure it? Leave the room at once, sir, or I'll—" and I advanced threateningly toward him. My unexpected attitude seemed to amuse him more than any thing else, but it silenced his suspicions. He put his hands in his pockets, and delivered a loud laugh in my face.

"Wal, wal, my bantam, ye needn't git so cantankerous. Who'd 'a' thought sich a little breeches as you had so much spunk? Haw! haw! haw! Why I could chaw you up 'bout makin' two bites of ye."

"Well, sir," I said, still apparently unmollified, "either sit down and hold your tongue, or else leave the office," and he good-naturedly complied.

Once more we were sitting listening to the ticking of the clock as the minutes dragged their slow length along. Would help never come? Three minutes more. Great Heavens! The suspense was becoming intolerable. I must go to the stair and listen if I died for it. I arose and took a step toward the door, but a voice stopped me.

"Hold!" shouted Lynch, standing upright, all his suspicions aroused once more; "yer can't go out of that door afore me. Come back here!"

"Sit!"  
"Come back here, or by the Eternal!" and the pistol muzzle looked me in the face. He stood now half turned from the door and I was facing it. Slowly, without a particle of noise, I saw the nob turn and a face under a blue cap peep in. "Thank God! Help had come! I felt a joy uncontrollable come over me. I must keep the murderer's attention an instant longer till some one could spring upon him from behind. I walked straight up to him, but his quick ear had caught a movement behind. As he turned with an oath, I sprang upon him, and bore down his arm just as the revolver went off, the ball burying itself harmlessly in the floor. Before he could free himself from my clasp, half a dozen officers were upon him; and he was quickly secured.

The next morning the papers were filled with glowing accounts of the capture of the murderer, and praises of my conduct. The principal business men of the town made up a purse of five hundred dollars and presented it to me; and this, with the reward that was paid me the following week, enabled me to get married at Christmas. But I often shudder at the remembrance of that half-hour I spent alone with Tim Lynch; and I don't think one thousand dollars would tempt me to go through it again.

AMERICAN iron is conceded to be superior in quality and strength to English. The following comparisons will show the relative tensility of Lake Superior and English iron, trials having been made by the use of the testing machine made by Ritchie, of Philadelphia, which is



## HER HANDKERCHIEF.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

Her handkerchief! ah, blessed waif!  
Do I possess it truly?  
The worshipful relic of my girl,  
And smelling of patchouli!  
How light and airy in my hand!  
And bordered round with lace-work.  
Looking as woven from the mist—  
Too delicate for face-work.

Each subtle thread so deftly fine  
Seems very immaterial.  
Perhaps the maiden's love for me  
May be just as ethereal.  
Ah, what a very tender theme  
A poem to compose of  
Yet what an un-substantial thing  
For Kate to blow her nose on!

How proud I am to-day with this!  
My weakness is but human.  
How does it whisper of my sweet  
And her colored washwoman?  
At table when admiring her  
I dropped my cap in quaffing.  
'Twas this she poked in her sweet mouth  
To keep herself from laughing.

Ah, blessed thing! when I was cold  
(Oh, how my spirit cries out!)  
I wonder if with this she brushed  
The tears from her sad eyes out?  
Henceforth no tears those eyes shall know,  
And not a sorrow near!  
This shall be as a flag of truce,  
A banner Hymeneal!

Sweet souvenir of fairy hands!  
How lovingly I fold it!  
I wear it next my beating heart  
Forever there to hold it.  
More sacred as fleet time goes by  
And love with years increases—  
Unless I use it by mistake,  
And blow it all to pieces.

## Strange Stories.

## THE DEMON DUELIST.

## A Legend of Granada.

BY AGILE PENNE.

GRANADA was in a flame, and well it might be, for a swarthy-faced cavalier pranced up and down the Prado and defied the prowess of the Spaniards.

And yet ten years had not passed away since Isabel, the Catholic, by dint of arms, had driven the Moslem from Granada's walls.

Poul disgraced was it then that a Pagan Moor, a kinsman of One-eyed Tariff, and born with the right to wear the green turban, sacred to the descendants of the Prophet Mahound, should lord it over the free-born Spaniard, who dwelt within Granada's ancient walls.

A month had the stranger sojourned within the city, and in that month, in single fight, he had slain twenty of the best swordsmen that all Spain could boast.

Little wonder, then, that the superstitious people looked upon the swarthy stranger, who called himself Abdallah El Tigris, as being possessed of more than mortal powers.

Each day, when the sun descended, and the cool breeze of the evening commenced to stir the leaves of the Alhambra grove, El Tigris, preceded by a single attendant, bearing a small Moorish drum, would promenade through the principal square of Granada, an insolent menace to the pride of the Spaniards.

But not a haughty don within Granada's walls dared to stop the way of the insolent Moor.

Far and wide extended the fame of the Demon Duelist, for so the awe-stricken people had named the Moor. There was many a daring heart within the ancient town-walls, but one and all shrunk from encountering a foe aided by the cohorts of Satan.

And so the Demon Duelist lorded it over Granada, greatly to the shame and scandal of the city.

The sun was sinking in the west, and, as usual, the Moor set out for his daily promenade.

With hand on sword-hilt, head thrown back, and manner defiant, Abdallah strode along, preceded by the Moorish drummer.

Half-way through the grand square had the Moor advanced, the Spanish cavaliers turning in shame-faced fear to the right or left, and the noble ladies of Granada hiding their blushes behind their veils, that they might not witness the triumph of the insolent Pagan.

And then came a sudden shock that startled every heart.

A reckless-looking gallant, covered with dust, and with a sword and dagger clapped forth from the throng and thrust the naked blade of his sword through the Moorish drum.

"Have done with your noise, sir cur!" cried the stranger. "This is a Christian city, and the beat of the Pagan drum is not pleasant to the Spanish ears."

Then, like a toad swollen with rage, Abdallah advanced upon the wild gallant.

"Who dares affront me thus?" he exclaimed, with angry brow, glaring upon the tattered cavalier.

"I dare!" the Spaniard answered—"I, Miguel Diaz, nephew to the Great Cid, the Master of Bivar!"

The spell of the Cid's name—the mighty Spanish champion—had not yet lost its power, though years had come and gone since Ruy Diaz had sunk into the slumber of the tomb, and the Moor felt back a foot or two.

"I am thy man, good master Pagan, if thou hast the courage to measure blades with me!"

Quickly the Moor accepted the challenge, and it was at once arranged that the fight was to take place at early sunrise the next morn.

The Demon Duelist went on his way, and the ragged cavalier swaggered through the town.

The good people looked on with interest at the wild nephew of the mighty Cid, and some few cast pitying glances upon him. In their eyes he was a doomed man, for how could he hope to cope with Abdallah El Tigris, when so many better men had failed?

Young Miguel was looked upon as a madman, and no citizen of Granada offered him bite or sup that night. Within the walls of the ruined Alhambra, Miguel sought refuge.

Other wanderers beside the wild gallant were harbored there that night; a band of Egyptians—fortune-tellers, necromancers, dealers in the black art.

Boldly the Spanish gallant sought their watch-fires and claimed their hospitality.

No true Romyany can refuse a stranger salt and fire; and so, young Miguel became the honored guest of the Egyptians.

When the meal was over, and by the glimmering fire the band was stretched, the leader of the Egyptians spoke of the coming contest on the morrow. The wanderers had recognized the daring challenger of the Demon Duelist.

"You have trusted the Bohemians and accepted their shelter," the chief of the tribe said; "pledge me thy word that in the time to come, when thou art rich and powerful, that the children of Egypt shall find a friend in thee and we will read the stars and discover there the charm that protects the Moor, Abdallah, from the swords of his foes."

The promise was quickly given, and then, the aged mother of the tribe drew Miguel apart

from all the rest to a nook in the walls where a mystic kettle bubbled and simmered.

Long and earnestly the crone debated, muttering strange charms in the Arabic tongue, and adding powerful simples to the broth that bubbled in the pot.

"The spell works!" she cried at last, in triumph, as she peered into the ink-like broth. "The charm that guards the life of El Tigris was weaved by no mortal hand. With the master of all evil, the awful Prince of Darkness himself, Abdallah hath bargained, and Satan hath agreed that in consideration of his soul for all time to come, he will protect the life of the Moor from certain weapons, and from certain things. No sword that iron hath ever touched or leather received can harm him; no man standing in leather shoes can prevail against him; no man bearing iron upon his person can hurt him."

"And I have engaged to encounter him with swords!" Miguel exclaimed. "Where, then, can I find a rapier that iron never has touched?"

"Here!" cried the Egyptian mother, and she hobbled to her tent hard by, and produced a sword of brass. Brass was the hilt and brass the blade, all shining like molten gold.

"And no iron has touched this weapon?" the Spaniard asked, as he surveyed the curious thing.

"No; in far off Egypt was it wrought, and no hammer ever made a dint upon it."

Beneath the open sky, with the wondrous sword clasped to his side, guarded by the swarthy sons of the far East, the wild young gallant slept that night.

At early dawn he arose, and robing himself after the fashion of the sons of Egypt, took his way to the spot appointed for the fight, attended by the Gipsy men.

A multitude of people had assembled to witness the struggle.

The Moor, with drawn sword, paced impatiently up and down, anxious for the coming of his destined victim.

Great was the astonishment of Abdallah and of the multitude when they beheld young Miguel approach, habited in the simple, loose robes of the East, no covering upon his feet, and the gleaming sword of brass shining in his hand.

"What mockery is this?" cried the Moor, an anxious shadow passing over his swarthy features.

"Are you ready for the fight, Sir Pagan?" the Spaniard questioned.

"Take a proper weapon!"

"Nay, I fight with this," Miguel replied; "our contract calls for swords, and this is one."

"I will not fight with thee," the Moor said, irresolutely.

"Then I will slay you where you stand!" the Spaniard cried, advancing.

Forced thus to fight or fly, Abdallah, with the desperation of despair, turned with fury upon the wild gallant.

Steel clashed against brass; short and desperate was the struggle, but the Moor was no match for the Christian, and after a dozen passes the charmed sword of brass pierced the heart of the Pagan.

Down upon the ground, with the life-blood streaming free, sunk the boaster. Once he essayed to rise, and called upon his dark master in the realms below, but when did Satan ever aid one already doomed to die? And so, cursing in dark despair, died the Demon Duelist. Granada gladly gave Miguel power and place and called him great in rich renown.

## Educating a Wife.

BY JENNIE DAVIS BURTON.

"Now that you have picked her up, what do you intend to do with her, Archie?"

Archie Serle looked down contemptently at the morsel of toddling humanity with dimpled fists full of ginger-bread, and black, velvety eyes turned up to him with as much trustfulness, as though the tiny creature understood that her fate hung upon his words and had implicit faith in the decision.

"Keep her, Julie. You don't suppose I could have the heart to turn a baby like that out upon the world, I hope?"

Mrs. Julie Armistead elevated her delicate eyebrows.

"Some beggar's brat, if not worse, for all you may ever know. Upon my word, brother, you carry chaos in your eyes in even contemplating such a thing. Orphan asylums are maintained for the purpose of meeting just such cases as this. My advice is decidedly to pack the little baggage off before Eustacia Dean comes down next week. She is not likely to take to a *protégée* like that!"

"I shall not ask her to," coolly. "Eustacia Dean is, like the most of you women nowadays, a pretty pink-and-white know-nothing. Don't distress yourself over an attempt at matchmaking, Julie, and do let your naturally kind heart warm toward this friendless child. From the moment the train went over the embankment and I came back to my senses to find this baby cuddled at my side, I felt that some special Providence had thrown her into my charge. Her mother was killed in the collision, and, so far as I can learn, little Amber hasn't a friend in the world. I mean to gratify my notion by keeping and educating her, and who is to know what great good I may be laying in store for myself?"

"By marrying her at last, after the orthodox fashion of ending such a charge. There's no turning you from a point you've set your mind upon, I know, so I can only hope you may not have occasion to regret the step, Archie."

Like compulsory well-wishers in general, Mrs. Armistead really meant that she hoped he would regret it, but Archie Serle, at twenty-five, being accountable to no one, and independent in his own right, there was nothing for it but to make the best of whatever course he might choose to pursue.

"Not a bad idea of yours, Julie, and about the only probability of a man suiting himself in a wife. By taking a child, educating her to one's taste, and then marrying her, would certainly be a methodical way of settling the vexed matrimonial question. But in that case Hal would be out out of the legacy which an exemplary bachelor uncle might be persuaded to leave him. What would you say to that, you monkey?"

But the monkey, a bright, curly-headed youngster of seven, was too engrossed in a game of bopeep with little Amber to attend the discourse of his elders.

Mr. Serle waited a trifle expectantly in the parlor of the convent school of the Sacred Heart. Would this experiment of his, surely an unprecedented experiment among the hosts of men, prove a disappointment? Twelve years in the care of these kindly sisters, during which time he had not once seen his *protégée*, must leave her he knew a pure-minded, fresh-hearted girl, very different from the fluttering butterflies he saw abroad. Her letters to him from time to time told him that, but Archie Serle was no less fastidious now than he had been fifteen years before, when more fair belles

than one had made desperate sets for the handsome young cynic. At forty he was a bachelor still, set down by the world as a hopeless case, and treasuring in his heart a sentiment that which none could be more quixotic.

The door swung back and a gray-clad figure glided in.

"This my little Amber!" said Mr. Serle, putting out his hands, and a sensation strange to the man thrilled him at touch of those dainty soft palms.

"My dear guardian! You are sure you are not disappointed in me then?"

Disappointed in her! He could have asked for nothing more. That tall, graceful form, that perfect, olive-tinted face, those eyes like deep, dark wells, the childlike faith and trust and innocence, were the realization of his fairest hope.

"Very sure, my dear. And you—have you been happy here where I placed you?"

"Happy? I suppose so. I don't think I should have been but for knowing I should go out into the world some day. Such utter peace for always would have been oppressive. But I was happy; it would have been ungrateful to you not to have been so. But I can't help being glad now that you are to take me away."

Something had been lacking within the shielding convent walls to perfect the young life. His heart beat faster for the thought that through him that something might be supplied, a quickening which forty years and cynical tendencies should certainly have disclaimed.

"Don't you know that the world is very full of trials, little girl? That just such innocents as you get the worst stabs from it?"

"Through fire we are purified. Whether it is better never to know suffering or to grow worthier through it? My world has been with these walls, guardian, but even here I have had examples before me. Those of the sisters who have suffered and found a refuge here always appear to have gained a peace more of heaven than those who have never been tried. If I had to end my life here, I should wish to be humbled by sorrow first."

"Heaven keep you from it," he said, with reverent tenderness. "Are you all ready to go, Amber?"

"All ready. I said good-by to the sisters early this morning."

"I have something to say first, little one. There was a hope in my heart when I placed you here, twelve long years ago, which has grown in all the time since. I wanted to see you a woman, with none of the world's frivolity about you, and you are all I ever dreamed you could become. I never married, because I never found such another woman. I never will marry unless you are willing to come to me in all your freshness and purity. Can you trust me that far, Amber? Can you love me well enough to promise now to be my wife?"

Archie Serle had never reflected that his own course might be the height of selfishness. The fact did not dawn upon him now as he awaited her answer, and the introduction of experience like a fair blank page yet to be written upon with only the faintest shadows in her eyes, looked up at him trustingly as she had done in her babyhood and made simple answer:

"If you wish it, it must be right. I have never known any love but yours, guardian."

Thus the liberty she had longed for found her fettered, and even a golden-linked chain may chafe.

It was June, the month of flowers, of sweet odors and pure delights. Serle Grange was alive, as it always was at this pleasant season, his master was to the acre, and, bachelor as he was, kept open house under the supervision of his sister from June to September.

A great gray house, with drooping boughs and clambering vines, roses running riot, making the air heavy with perfume, a wide stretch of velvety green with the white pebbled drive winding through it, a gleam of water in the sun from an artificial lake at the side, a dozen white steps and a terrace where pansies and white-cloves, stately lilies and glowing stocks and flashing trumpet-blossoms were like a strip of rainbow painted upon the earth—that was Serle Grange as Amber saw it first at its fairest.

Quietness about it, even the birds hushed during the mid-day splendor, no motion but the ripple of a breeze upon the leaves until a young man started forward and ran down the steps.

His head was bare and glittered like rich yellow floss silk in the sun, his face was laughing, boyish, the hand he put out to assist Amber down white as his own.

"Never mind the introduction, uncle Archie. Have you forgotten what friends we two were upon a time? What is it possible you don't remember me, Miss Amber? Harry Armistead at your service then. You were only three, so I suppose I am bound to forgive your forgetting. Everybody about the house is taking a snooze except *mater*, who is on the look-out for your earthly comforts, and myself to bid you welcome to Serle Grange. How does it compare with your convent, Miss Amber? Did you fancy yourself in Heaven there, so far removed from the sins of earth and the temptations we mortals are subjected to?"

"This seems more like Heaven," said Amber, with a deep, quiet breath and a glance around. "There is more loveliness here than I ever saw in any other place."

"I agree with you there," said Hal, with a glance which would have brought a blush to any less unconscious cheek. And then Archie Serle, a little resenting that look, hurried her into the house where Mrs. Armistead awaited them.

Lunch with tea was prepared for them, and Harry sauntered in to claim a saucer of berries for the reward of his wakefulness.

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